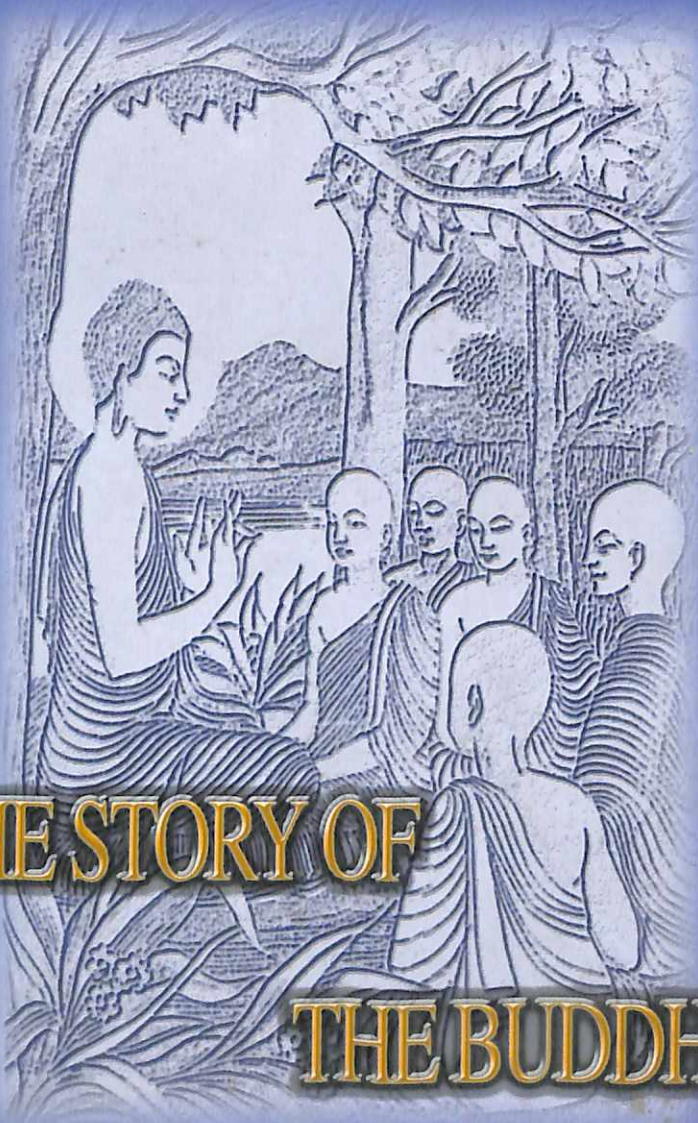

THE STORY OF THE BUDDHA

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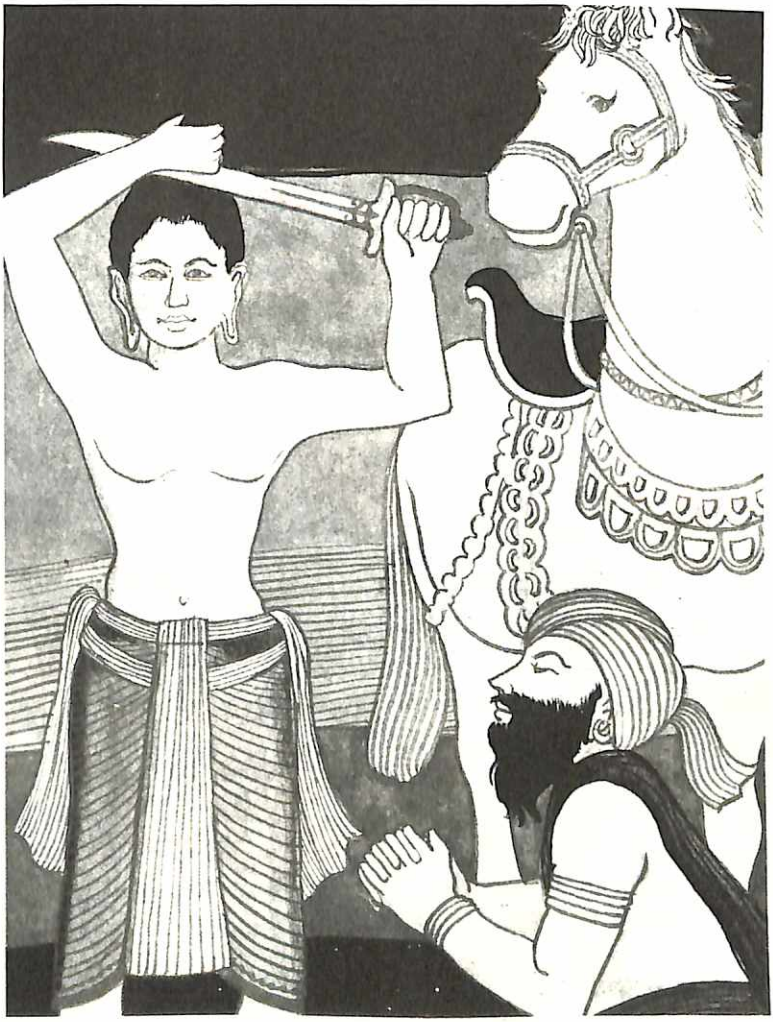


FOREWORD

This is a book which tells a story. The story is unlike many others, because, although it has all the right ingredients, (kings, princesses, chariots and the like), this particular one is about a historical person who lived in India in the 6th century, B.C.

The Way of Life taught by the Buddha is followed by more than one fifth of the world population today and it is hoped that this book may promote interest in Buddhism as well as help to bring about understanding between different cultures. It meets a long-felt need in the West for a book to be read by and to children about the Buddha's life and times.

The publishers would like to thank everyone who helped to make this book a fact, both friends here in England and those in Sri Lanka. We hope very much that this will be the first in a series of books and that our helpers will continue to give us their kind assistance in the future.

Stories are for children, but they are also for adults so we hope that this rather special one will be enjoyed by everyone who has the capacity and imagination which is so uniquely a privilege of children the whole world over.

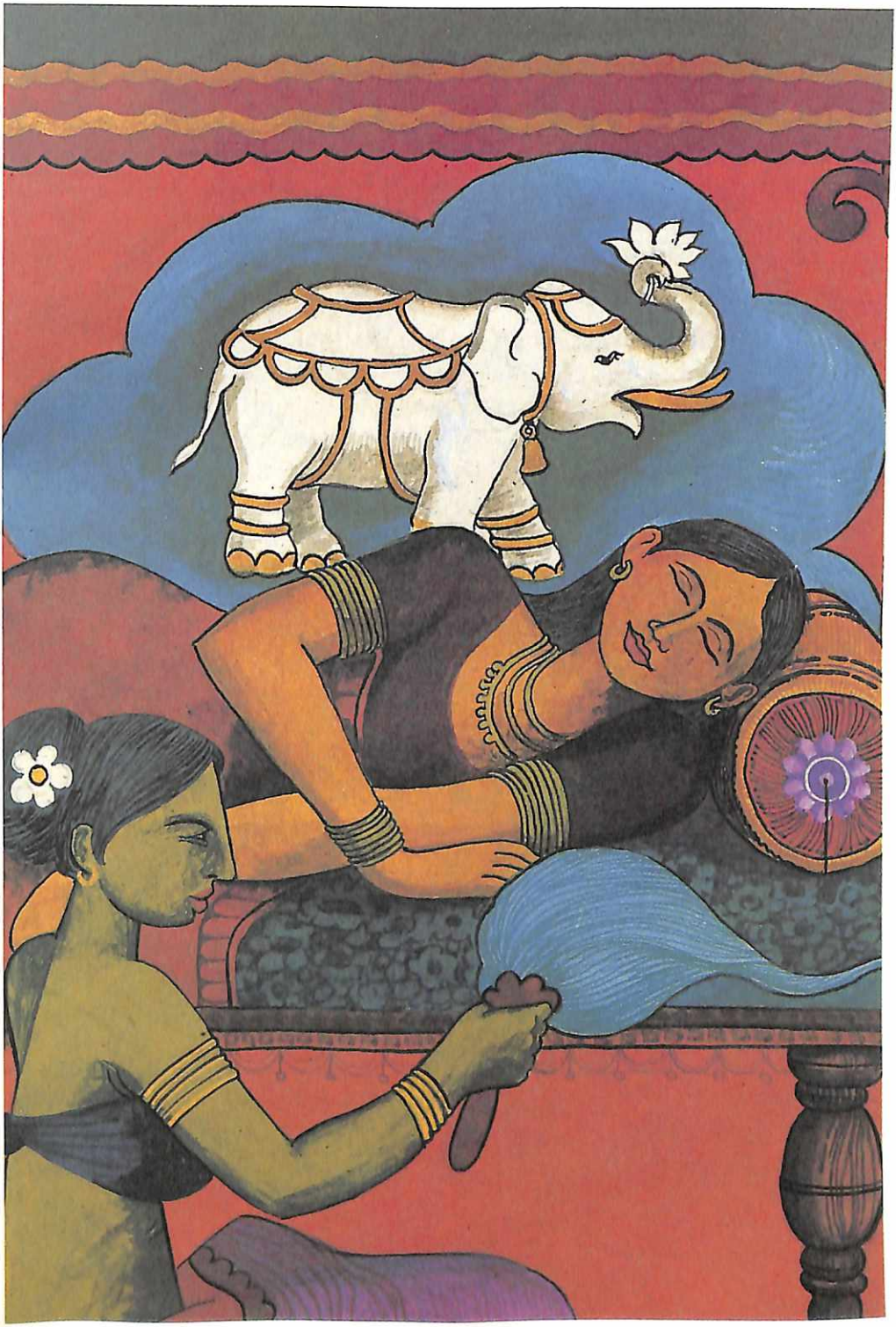
THE STORY OF THE BUDDHA

About two thousand six hundred years ago in North India, at the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains, there were a number of little kingdoms, each ruled over by its own Raja or King. One of these kingdoms was the land of the Sakyas. They were a warrior clan and the name of the King who ruled over them at the time was Suddhodana. The King lived in the capital city, called Kapilavastu, on the Nepal frontier.

One night, Queen Maha Maya had a very strange dream. She saw a huge white elephant come into the room, carrying a lotus flower. The elephant trumpetted as it walked round her bed three times. In the morning, the King summoned the wise men of the land to the palace, to find out the meaning of this dream.

"Oh, King! A great and noble son will be born to your Queen," they said. The King and Queen were very happy.

When the baby was due, according to the custom at the time, the Queen asked her husband if she could visit her parents in the neighbouring kingdom. The King readily granted her wish and ordered that everything possible should be done to make the journey pleasant.

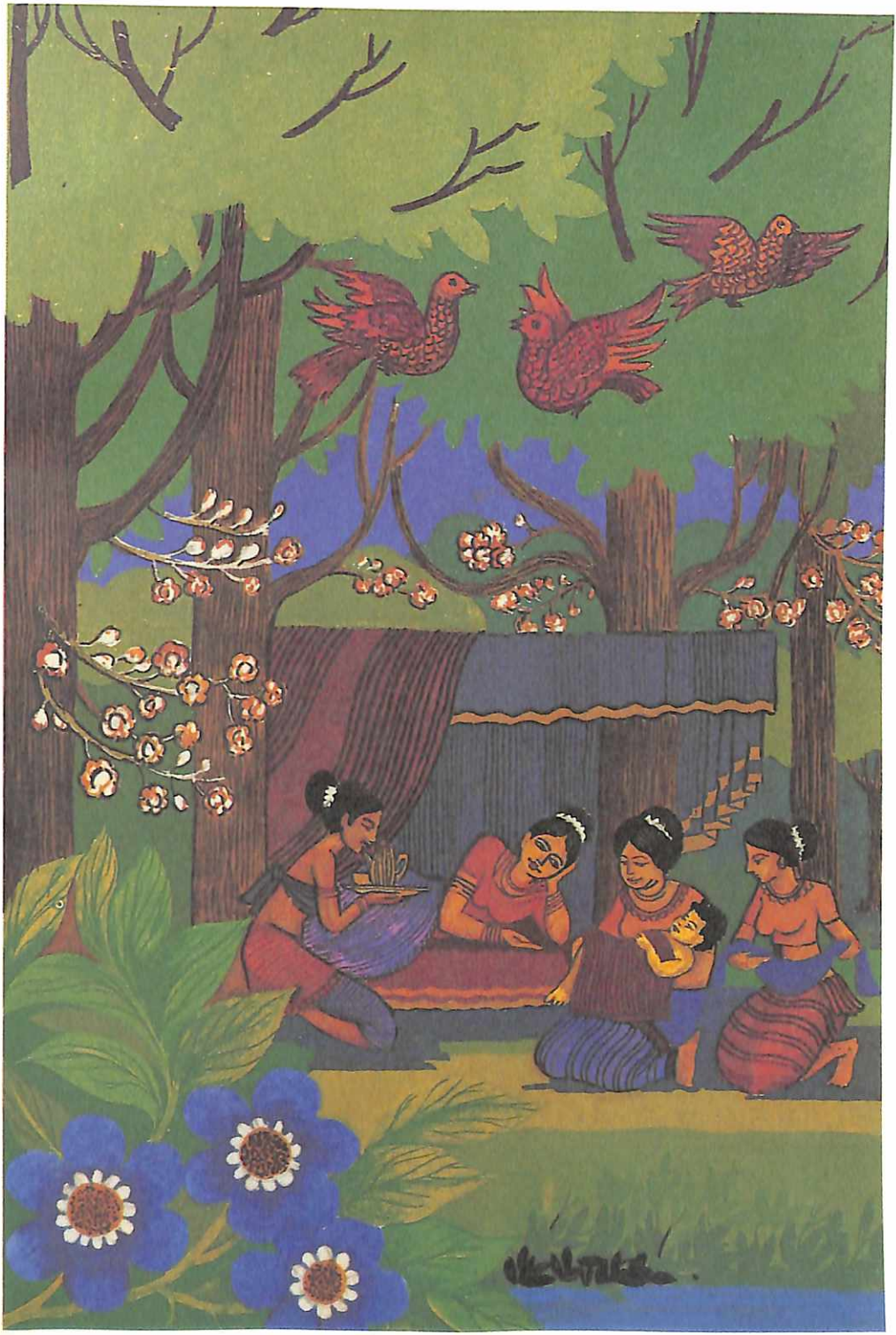


She was carried in a royal palanquin and was accompanied by many attendants all beautifully dressed and sparkling with jewels.

On the way, they had to pass a forest and some lovely gardens called Lumbini. When the Queen arrived at this delightful place, within sight of the snow-capped Himalayas, she thought that she would like to rest for a while in the cool shade. So it happened that, seated under a Sal tree in the peaceful Lumbini Grove, she had a baby boy. It was the full moon day in the month of Vesak (May). All the trees were in flower and a gentle breeze sang to the music of the birds and animals of this lovely forest garden. The bees hummed cheerfully as they flew from blossom to blossom, gathering honey. It was as if all nature was happy over the birth of this Prince.

The whole party returned to Kapilavastu, where the new Prince was greeted with great rejoicing.

The baby was very beautiful. His skin was the colour of gold and his eyes were a lovely deep, violet blue. His hair was black and his whole body and limbs were perfectly formed.

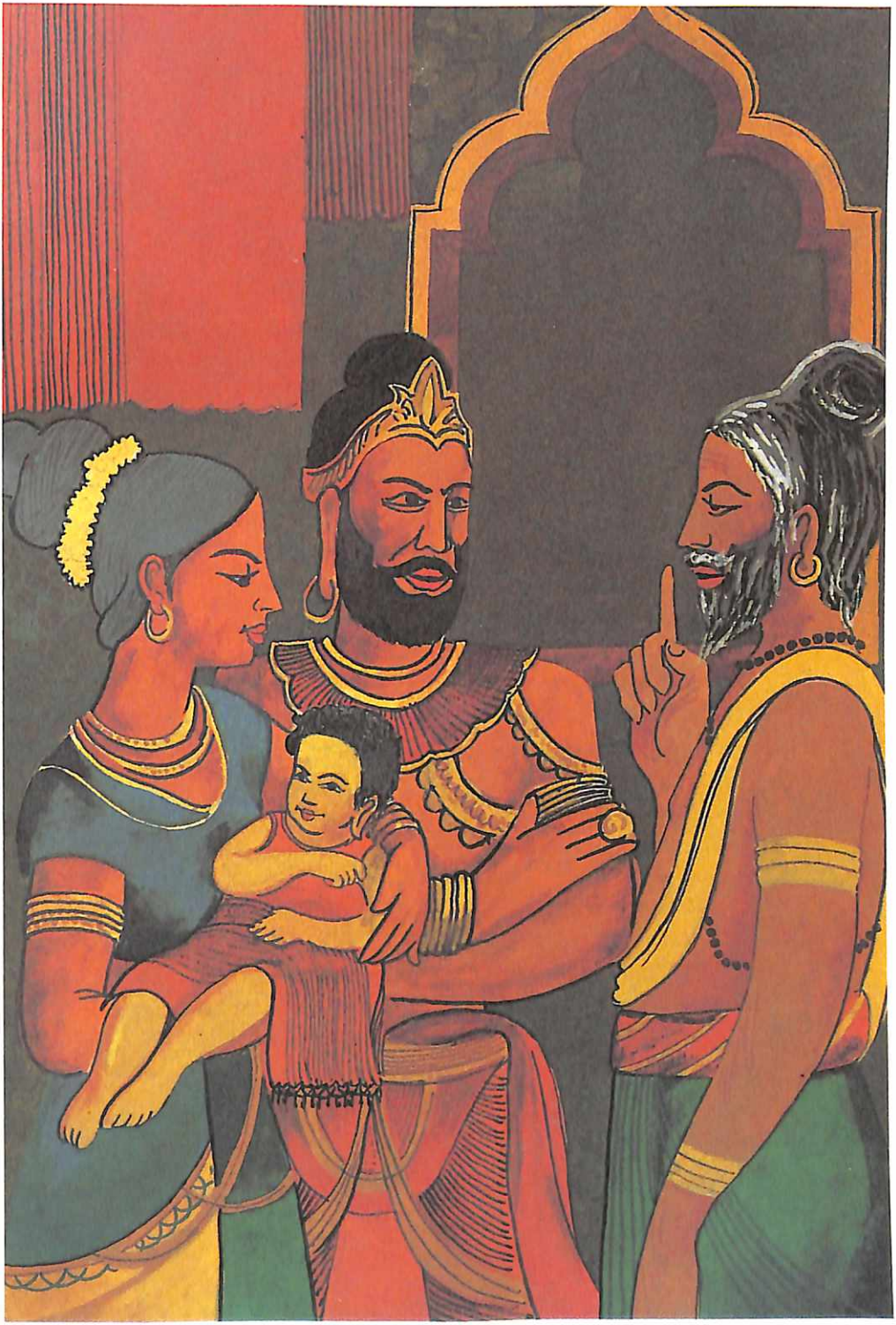


One of the first visitors to the palace after his birth, was a wise Sage called Asita. On seeing the baby, he first smiled and then tears began to trickle down his face. The King and Queen were worried.

"Will any harm come to our son?"

"Oh, no, Your Majesties," the Sage replied. "Your son will be extremely fortunate. I am smiling because I am very lucky to see him, who is no ordinary human being. He will be most unusual. In fact, he will become a Buddha one day, a Fully Enlightened One, who will teach the whole world how to find true happiness and relief from sorrow. I am old now and shall not live to see that day. That is why I am sad."

The King was not altogether happy at what he heard. He invited more learned and wise men to the palace, eight of them for the naming ceremony of his child. They studied special markings on the body of the baby. Seven of them said that he would one day become a great Emperor, or, indeed, a Buddha. But the eighth sage, whose name was Kondanna, was very definite that the Prince would one day see four Special Signs and give up his palace and family. He would lead the simple life of an ascetic in meditation and become a Buddha.

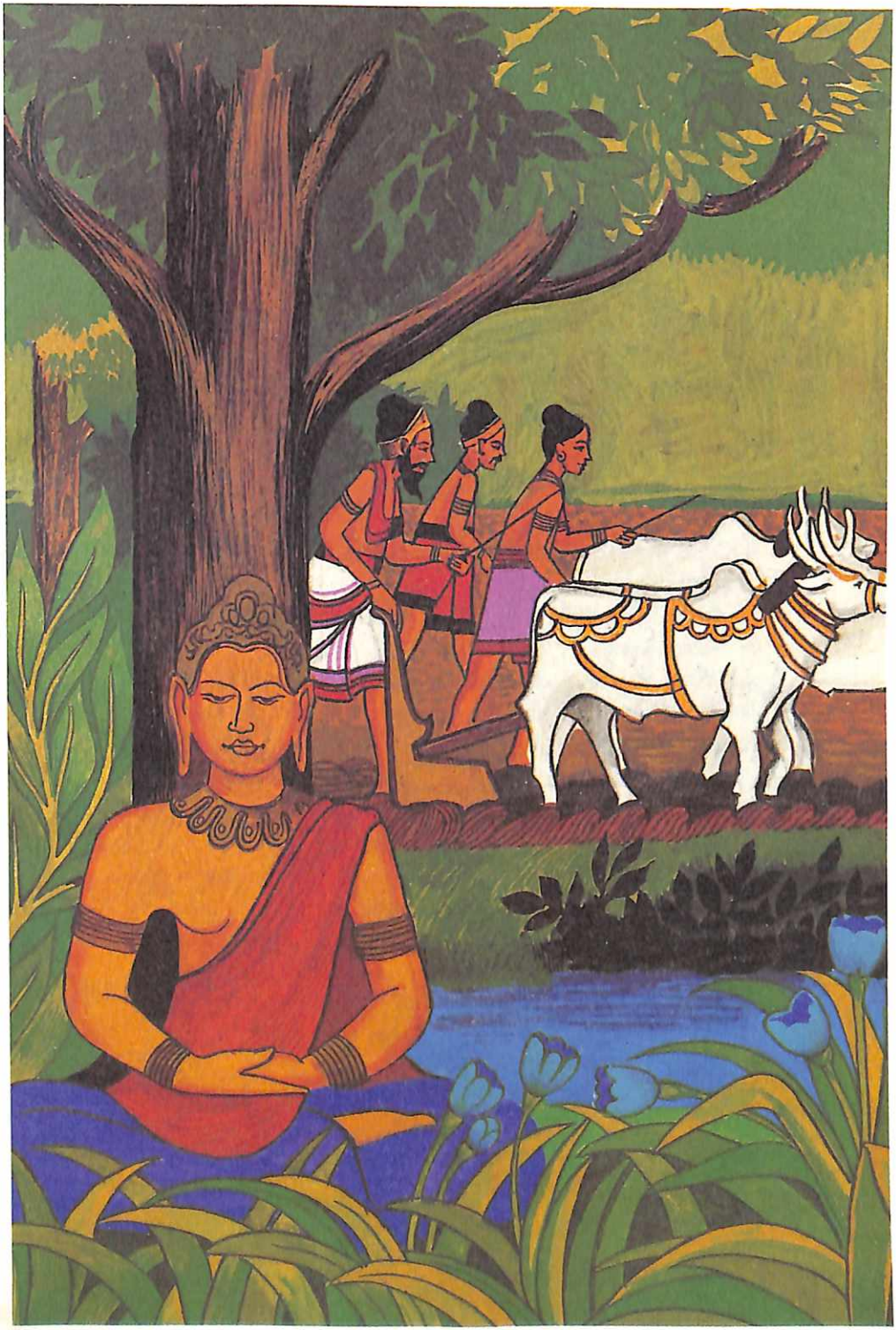


The King and Queen were very upset when they heard this. The baby was named Siddhartha, which means, 'the One whose wishes will be fulfilled' and the family name was Gotama.

Seven days after the birth of the Prince, Queen Maha Maya died. The Queen's sister, Prajapathi Gotami, nursed and cared for him as if he were her own. He grew up to be handsome, tall and strong and very good at his studies. He learned many subjects. At the same time, he was gentle and kind, well-mannered and loved by his people.

One day, his father took him to the ploughing festival which took place every year. The King drove the first pair of bullocks which were decorated with golden trappings and pulled a golden plough. The other nobles followed the King, driving silver ploughs and their bullocks had silver harnessing.

The young Prince was seated in the shade of a rose-apple tree. Instead of enjoying the ceremony, he started meditating: he concentrated on his breathing, now a breath in, now a breath out. When his attendants returned to him, they found him sitting cross-legged and in a deep trance. "What an unusual child," they said and went to inform the King.

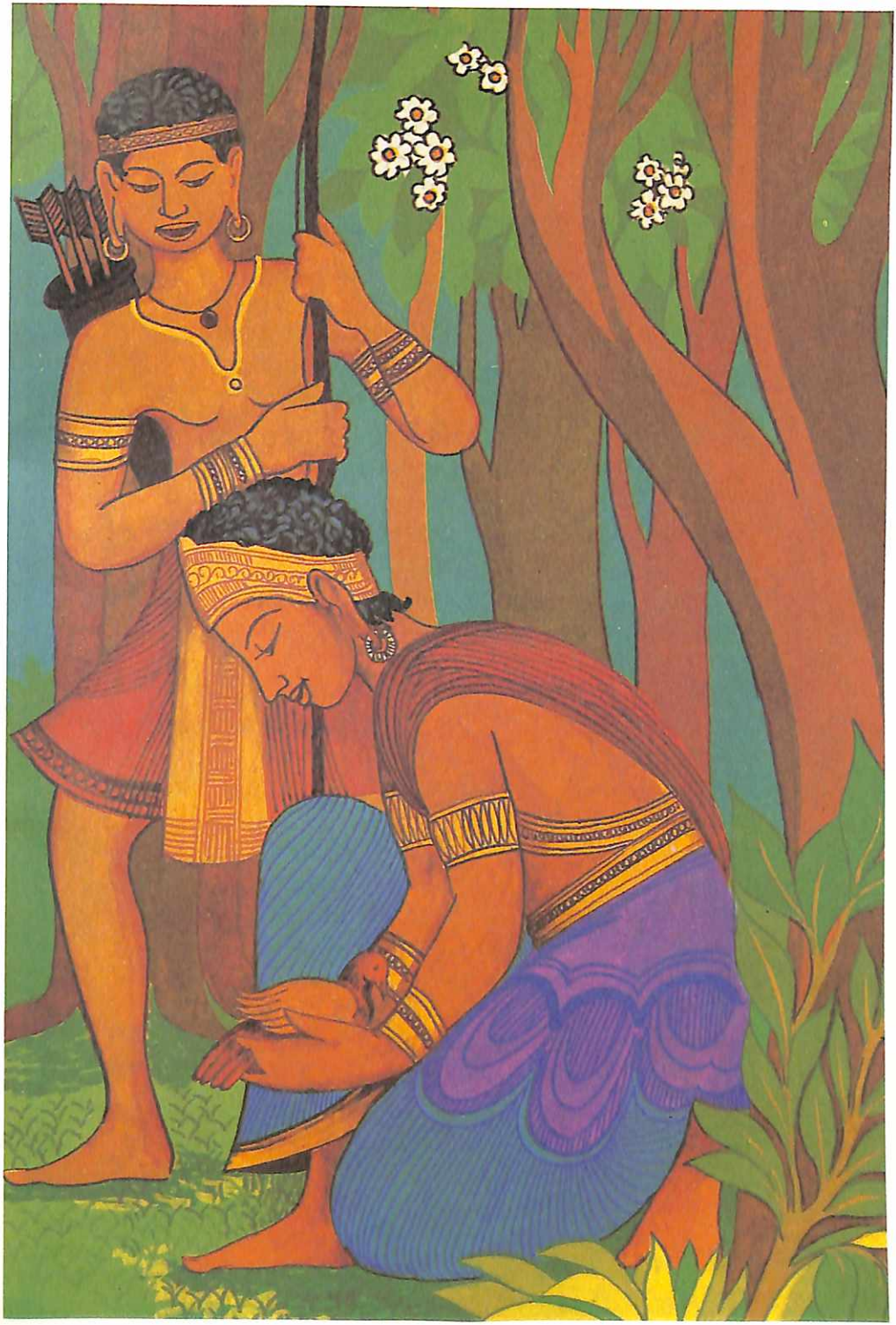


Siddhartha was very kind to animals. Often he preferred to play alone rather than join his friends in cruel games. One day, he was out in the woods with his cousin, Devadatta, who shot a bird flying overhead. The bird fell down. Siddhartha ran to it first and gently pulled the arrow out. He then picked some medicinal herbs and squeezed the juice on to the wound to stop the bleeding and calmed the frightened bird.

Devadatta said that the bird belonged to him. "It is mine. I shot it," he said.

"Had you killed it, it would have been yours. It is only wounded and I saved its life, so it is mine," said Siddhartha. They finally decided to go to a court of wise men to settle the matter. The court decided that a life belongs to the one who saves it and not to the one who tries to destroy it. So Siddhartha had the right to take the bird. Devadatta was very angry.

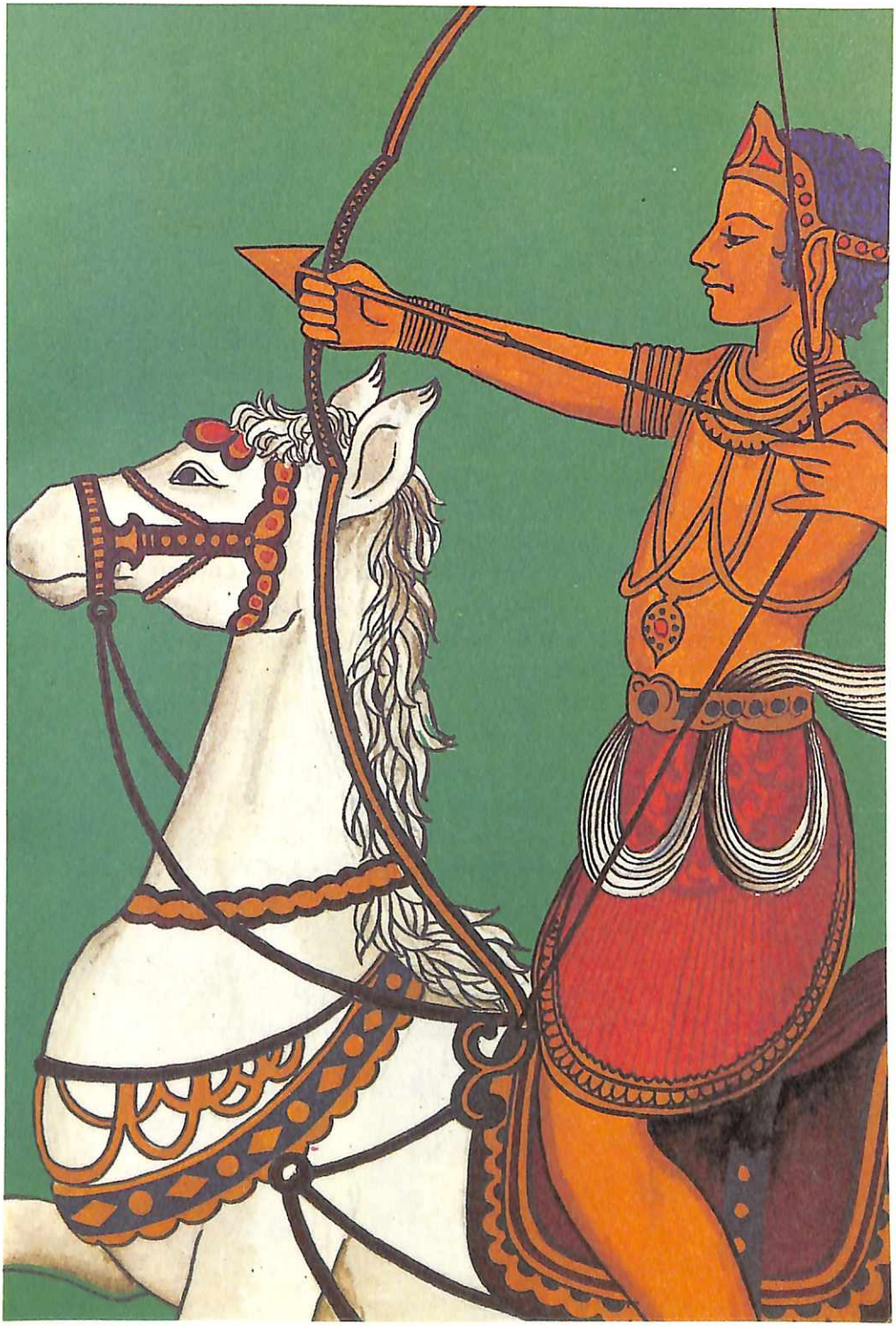
Siddhartha's compassion and contemplative nature greatly disturbed the King, who often pondered over the prophecy of the wise men. He decided to make absolutely certain that his son did not see the four Special Signs that would one day make him give up his royal pleasures.



King Suddhodana therefore ordered that the Prince should be surrounded only by the happy and beautiful aspects of life. Old and sick people were kept out of his sight. Death was not mentioned.

It is said that even fading flowers and leaves were removed from the royal gardens and pleasure parks so that the Prince would not see anything that suggested decay. The King provided every luxury. Three palaces were built for the three seasons of the year, the hot season, the rainy season and the cool months of the winter. These palaces had beautiful gardens laid out with fountains and ponds full of fish, swans and water-lilies.

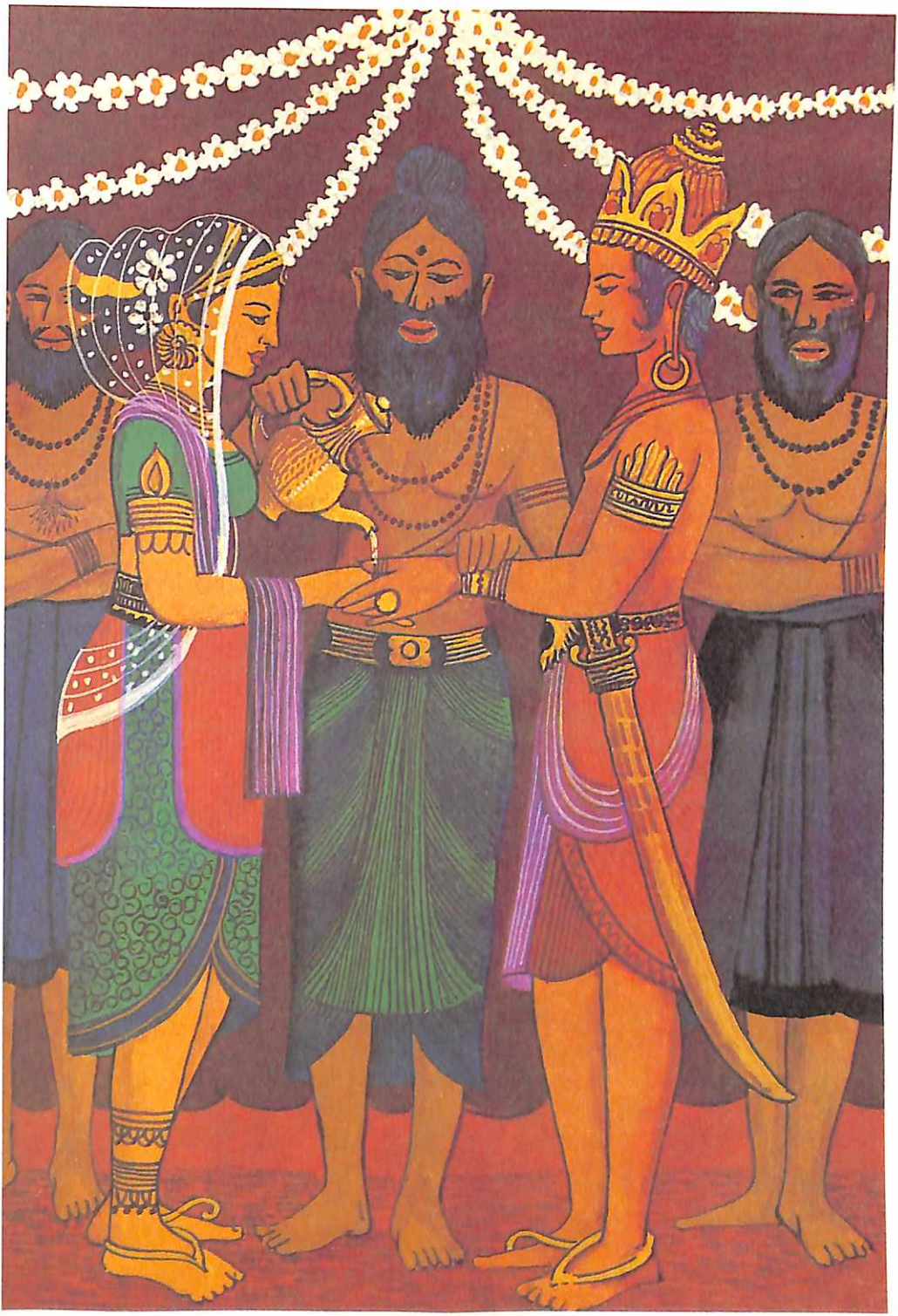
Young attendants served him. Dancing girls and musicians entertained him. In these surroundings, the Prince grew up to be a young man of great strength and beauty. He was now of an age to marry. His father, the King, sent messages to neighbouring kingdoms for proposals of marriage for Siddhartha. The messengers returned with the reply that although he was handsome and rich, the Prince was not a warrior and the neighbouring kings did not want to marry their daughters to a coward. When the King heard this, he was very upset. But Siddhartha said that he would prove his skills in any competition, including archery.



Everywhere, there was great rejoicing on that day. Horses with gleaming armour and with their riders in bright uniforms, each attended by their own standard-bearers, carrying their colourful flags, gathered in the palace square.

"Siddhartha has won the horse-riding and is leading in the archery contests, too," cried the crowds, excitedly. He easily won every contest that was held. Now that he had proved his skills in the arts of war, his father held a banquet to choose a bride for him, to which the neighbouring kings gladly sent their daughters. To everyone's surprise, Siddhartha chose his own beautiful cousin, Yasodhara. Her father willingly gave her in marriage to the gallant Prince. They lived in great splendour in a new palace surrounded by everything delightful and pleasant.

As time went by, the palace with all its luxuries and amusements made Siddhartha bored and restless. Also, all the efforts of King Suddhodana to make his son worldly-minded only increased the Prince's curiosity to see the world outside. So, one day, he summoned the royal charioteer, Channa, to take him for a drive on the outskirts of the palace.



Channa chose a beautiful chariot drawn by white horses. The people rejoiced to see their handsome Prince driving through the streets.

They had not gone very far when they saw a hunched-up old man by the roadside. This was a very unusual sight for the Prince. He stopped the horses.

"Who is that, he looks like a man but his hair is white. He has no teeth, his cheeks are sunken and his skin is wrinkled. He is weak and bent and he is leaning on a stick. What sort of man is that?"

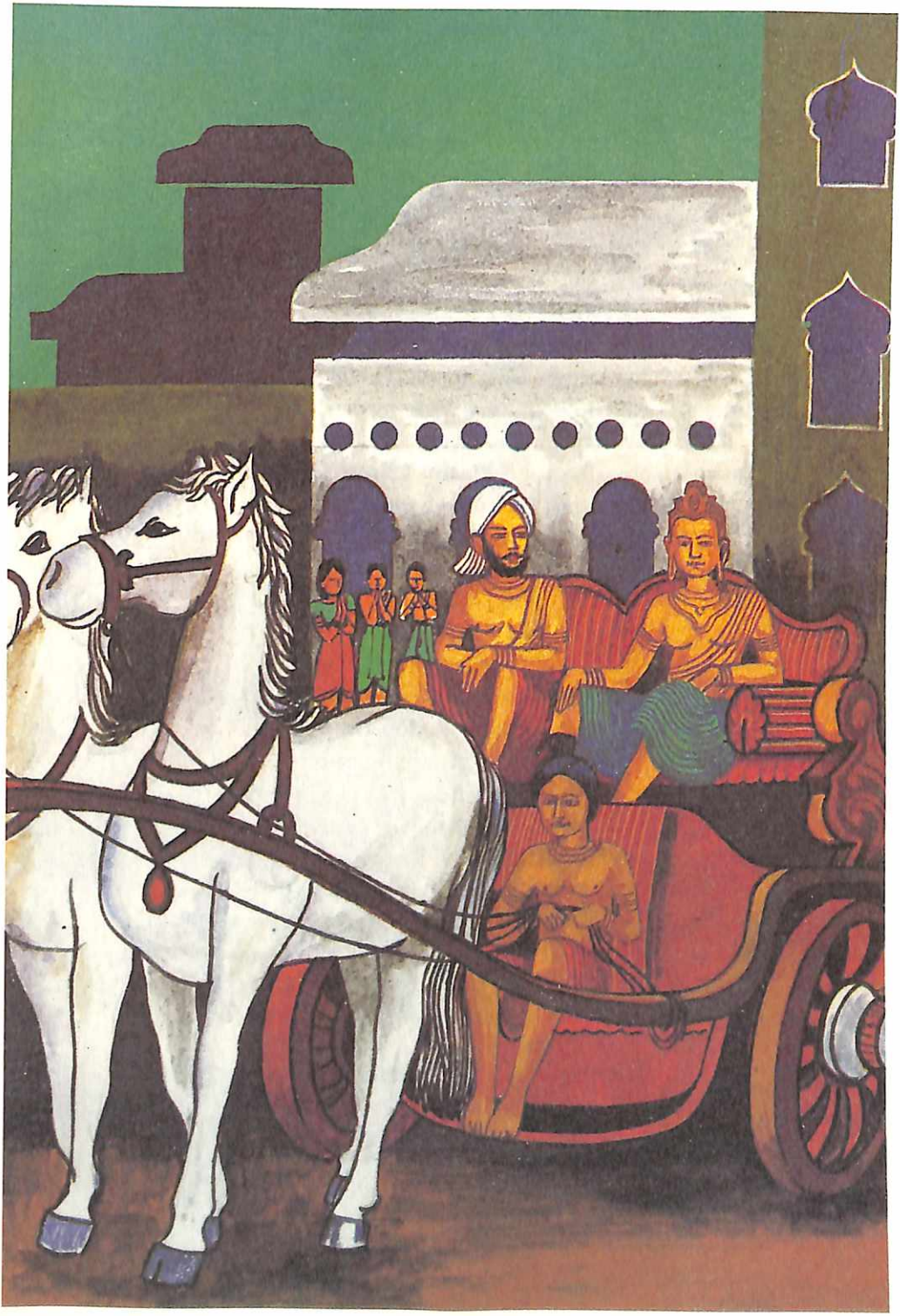
"That is an old man," replied Channa. "He has lived for a very long time."

"Does everyone get old, Channa? Will my beautiful Yasodhara get old, and you, yourself? Will I get old, too?"

Siddhartha was greatly disturbed by what he had seen.

On another day, when he was out with Channa, they saw a sick man. He was so weak that he could not stand up but rolled on the ground crying with pain. His body was covered with sores and his mouth was foaming. Channa explained that anyone could fall ill at any time.

On the third visit outside the palace, they saw a funeral procession pass by. The mourners were wailing with grief, carrying the corpse.



"Why are they carrying that man?" Siddhartha was amazed.

"That, my Lord, is a dead man."

In answer to more questions from the Prince, Channa explained that death is the end of life and that it is common to all who are born.

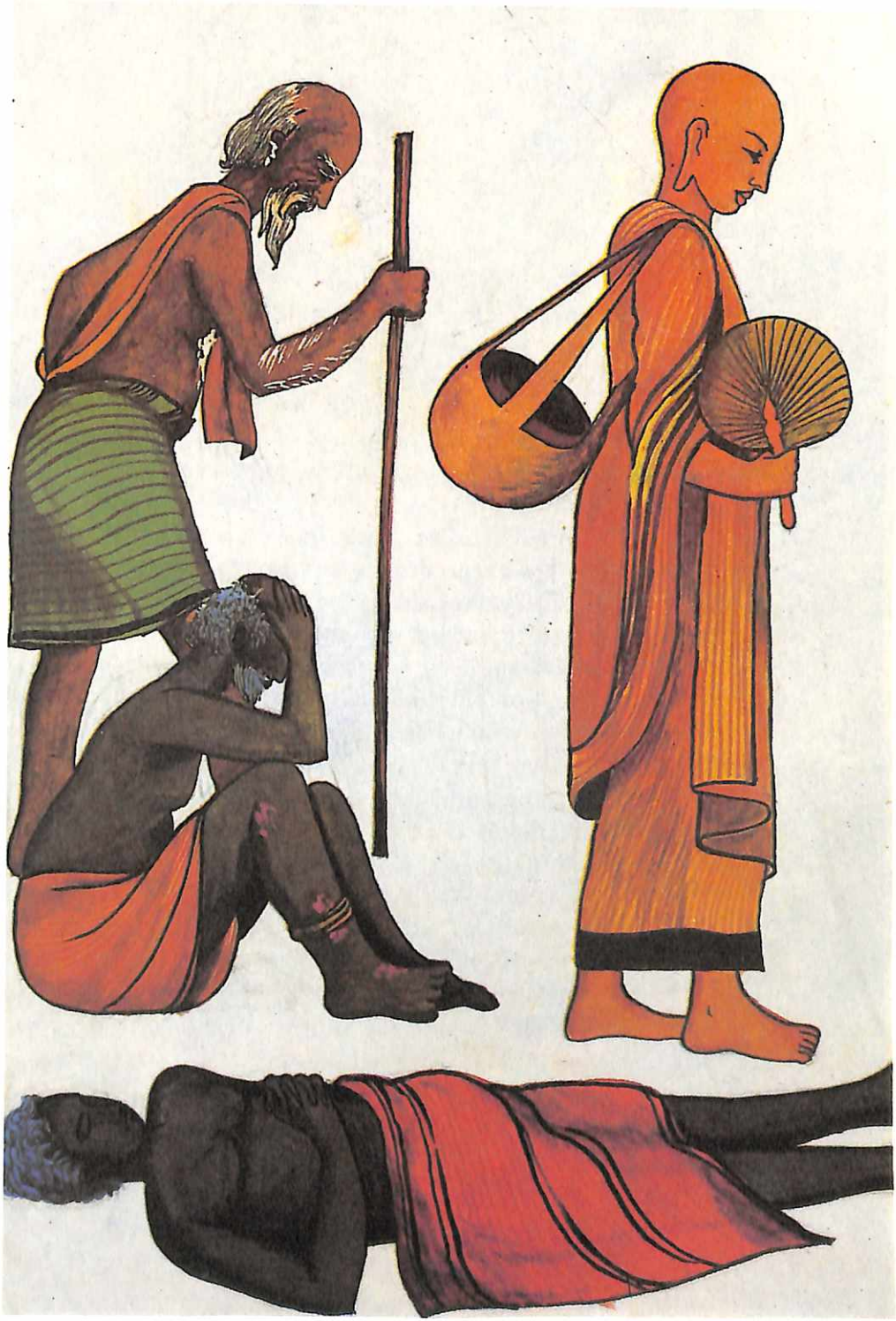
"Yes, even you and your Princess, Yasodhara, must surely die one day, my Lord. There is nothing you can do about it," emphasised Channa, clearly, heedless of the King's orders. Siddhartha felt almost ill at this realisation. "Let us return to the palace at once," he said, "I don't want to go any further."

On their way back, they were met by another unaccustomed sight. It was a man wearing a yellow robe and whose head was shaved. His calm and peaceful appearance impressed the Prince. Channa explained that this was a Sage — one who had given up home and family to find a way to end suffering.

At the palace, his step-mother asked him why he seemed to be so sad.

"I have learned that all living beings grow old and ugly, get ill and die. I am sad when I think about all this," was Siddhartha's quiet reply.

Siddhartha had now seen the four Special Signs which would change his life as predicted by the Sages and wise men at his birth.



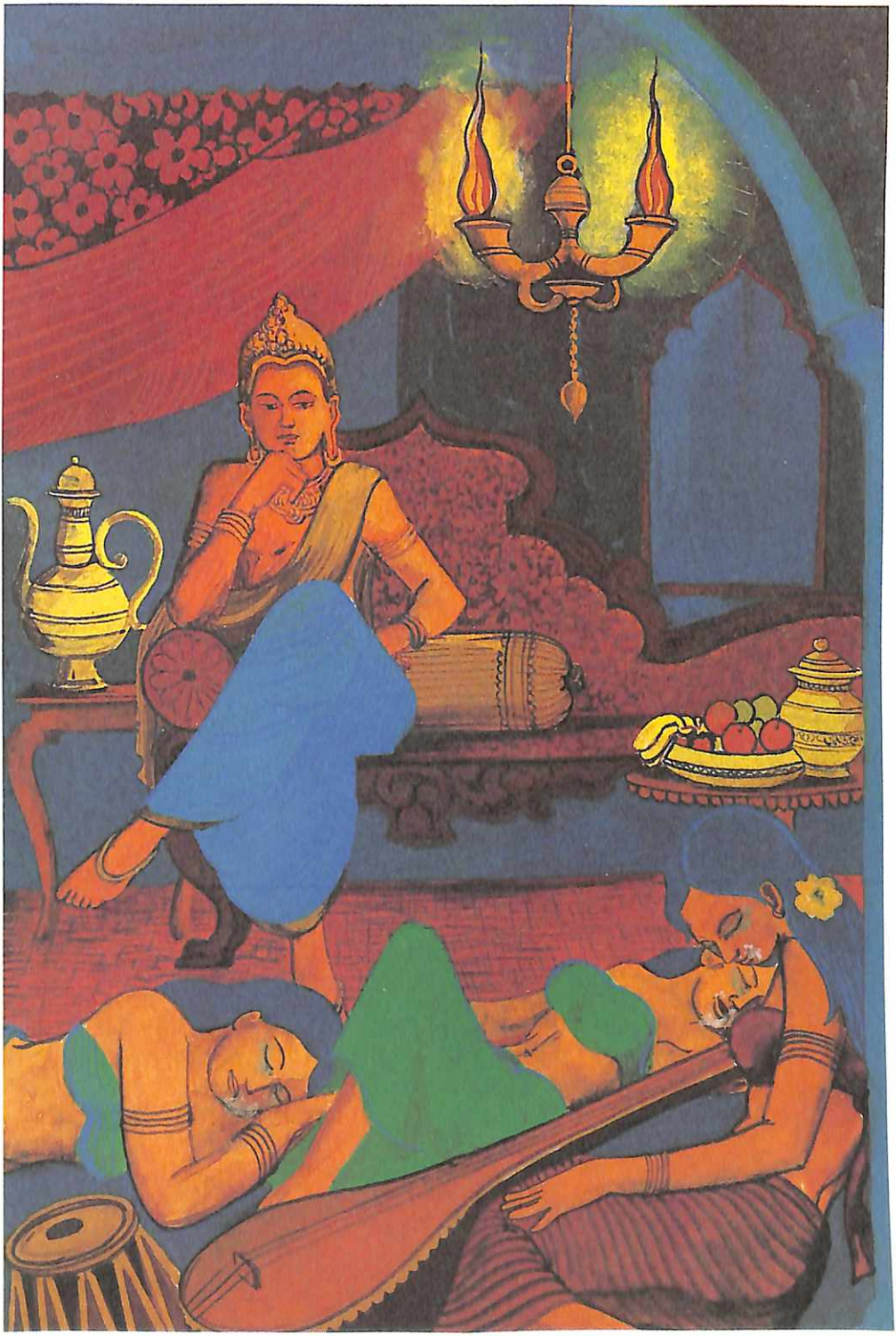
The King was deeply grieved that all the precautions he had taken had failed to protect his son. However, when a son was born to Princess Yasodhara, he was overjoyed and held a grand feast to celebrate the birth of the grandchild. He hoped that Siddhartha would not leave his wife and baby now.

The Prince attended the feast but was preoccupied with his own thoughts.

"I must become like that, that peaceful, calm person we saw in the street, dressed in yellow, seeking the way to end suffering. I shall renounce the world this very day. I have lived a very empty and superficial life all these years."

As the evening wore on, he dozed off as he had no interest in the amusements provided. The dancers and musicians seeing that the Prince was asleep, stopped their dancing and singing and lay down to rest, but soon fell asleep.

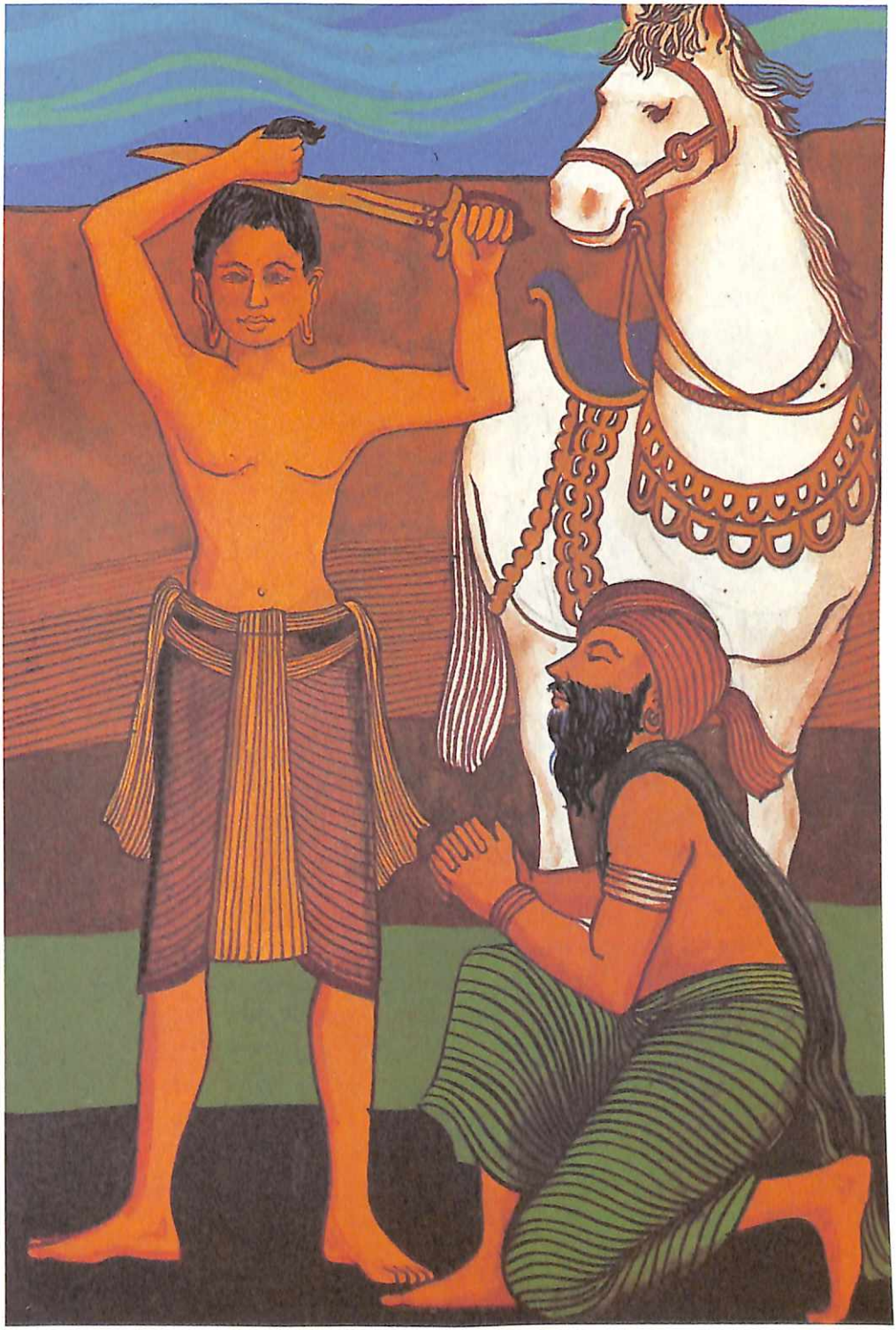
When he woke up, he was surprised to see everyone around him fast asleep. What a changed scene it was! Dancers and singers who had seemed so elegant before, were now sprawled about, some snoring, some grinding their teeth. It was a very unpleasant sight. His disillusionment with life in the world was complete.



He tiptoed out of the room and asked Channa to saddle his favourite horse, Kanthaka. Then he went to Yasodhara's apartments and looked into the bedroom very quietly. She was fast asleep embracing the baby in her arms. Siddhartha was only twenty-nine years old. With a heavy heart but with a strong determination, he tore himself away from them and rode out of the palace gates with Channa.

When they reached the river, Neranjara, he dismounted, cut off his hair and took off all his princely clothes and jewellery. He handed them all to Channa and ordered him to return to the palace, taking the horse with him. Channa was very sad. He begged the Prince to let him stay with him. But Siddhartha was firm in his refusal. Above all, he wanted Channa to return to the royal family and tell them not to grieve over his departure, because he would one day return to them when his quest was complete.

Channa prepared to leave but this time, Kanthaka refused to move. Siddhartha spoke to him gently and persuaded him to go with Channa. But Kanthaka knew that he would never see the Prince again and he was so sad that he kept looking back longingly at his master and died of a broken heart on the way.

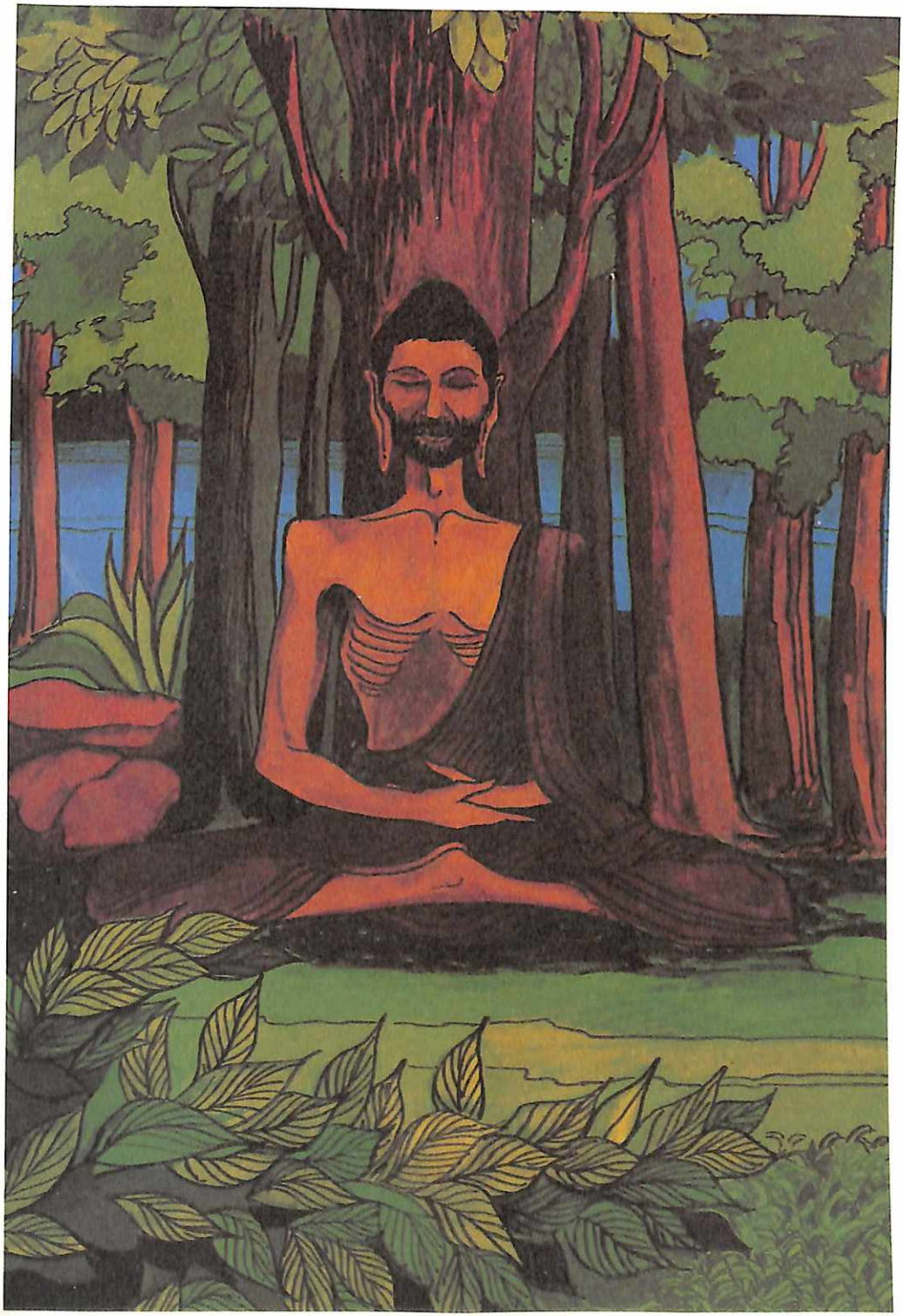


Siddhartha exchanged his princely clothes for those of a beggar and walked alone. He was no longer a prince, but the homeless ascetic, Gotama, in search of the Truth.

He went to Alara Kalama and Uddaka, well-known teachers of the time. Siddhartha studied very hard, until, one day, Alara said, "I have nothing more to teach you. You are equal to me now. Will you stay and help me with my pupils?" "Can you not teach me how to escape from death, illness and old-age?" asked Gotama. "No," said Alara, "No-one in the world knows that."

So he continued his search with other teachers and not being satisfied, wandered alone once again. At this stage he joined five other ascetics. Their names were Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama and Assaji. Together, they practised self-control and self-mortification, that is, going without the normal needs of food and rest, sleeping on hard ground and generally leading a very uncomfortable and hard life. They believed that to become spiritually pure, one had to torture the body.

The ascetic Gotama became so weak that one day he collapsed with hunger and pain. He was found by a shepherd who fed him on milk and looked after him till he became strong.



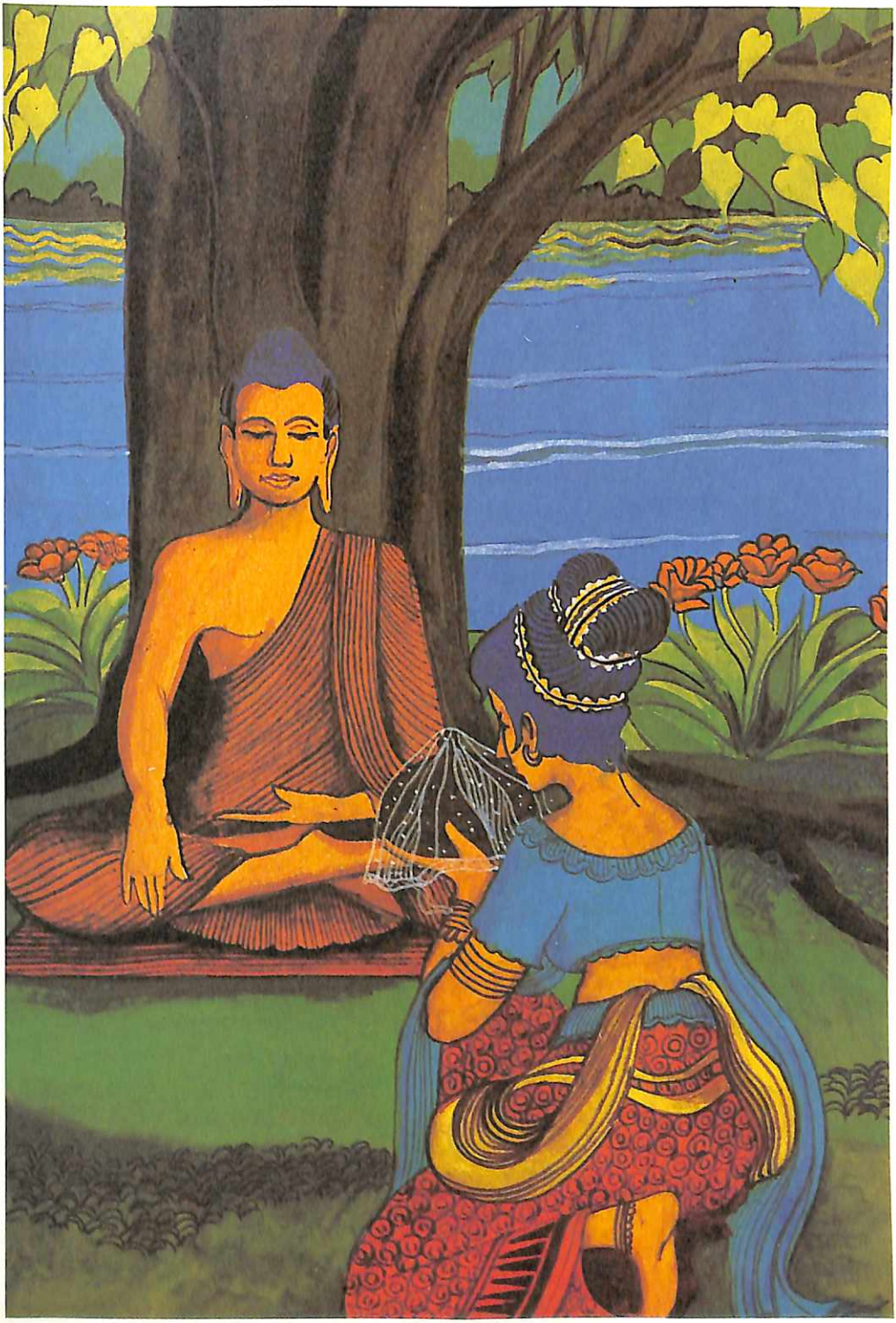
He realised that a life of mortification was useless. He knew from experience that the life of luxury which he had enjoyed as a prince was also futile. He therefore decided to follow a course between these two extremes — "The Middle Path". He started to re-live a normal life. The five ascetics were disappointed in him and left him.

He was determined to seek the Truth alone, unaided by teachers and companions.

At this time, there lived in a neighbouring village, a woman called Sujatha. She had a baby son and to fulfil a vow which she had made, she prepared a very special dish of milk-rice as an offering and came to the same grove where the ascetic Gotama was meditating.

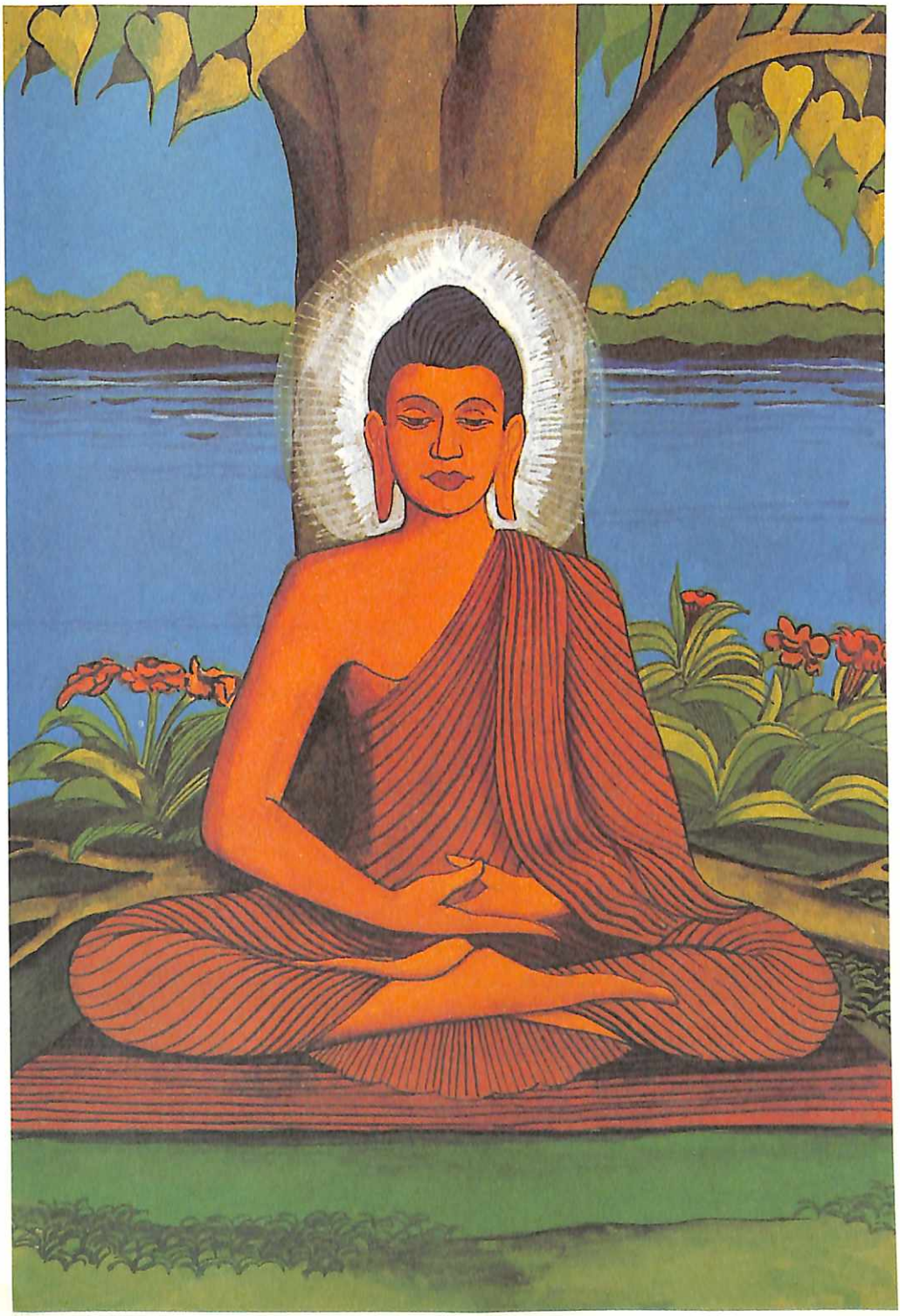
When Sujatha saw the beautiful and serene figure sitting under a banyan tree, she was overcome with awe. She made her offering and said, "Venerable Sir, whoever you may be, god or human, please accept this milk-rice and may you attain that goal which you seek." He took the offering. Then, he bathed in the river and sat on its bank and ate the milk-rice. After this, he returned to the river and placed the empty bowl on the water and said, "May this bowl float upstream if I am to attain Enlightenment."

The bowl did float upstream.



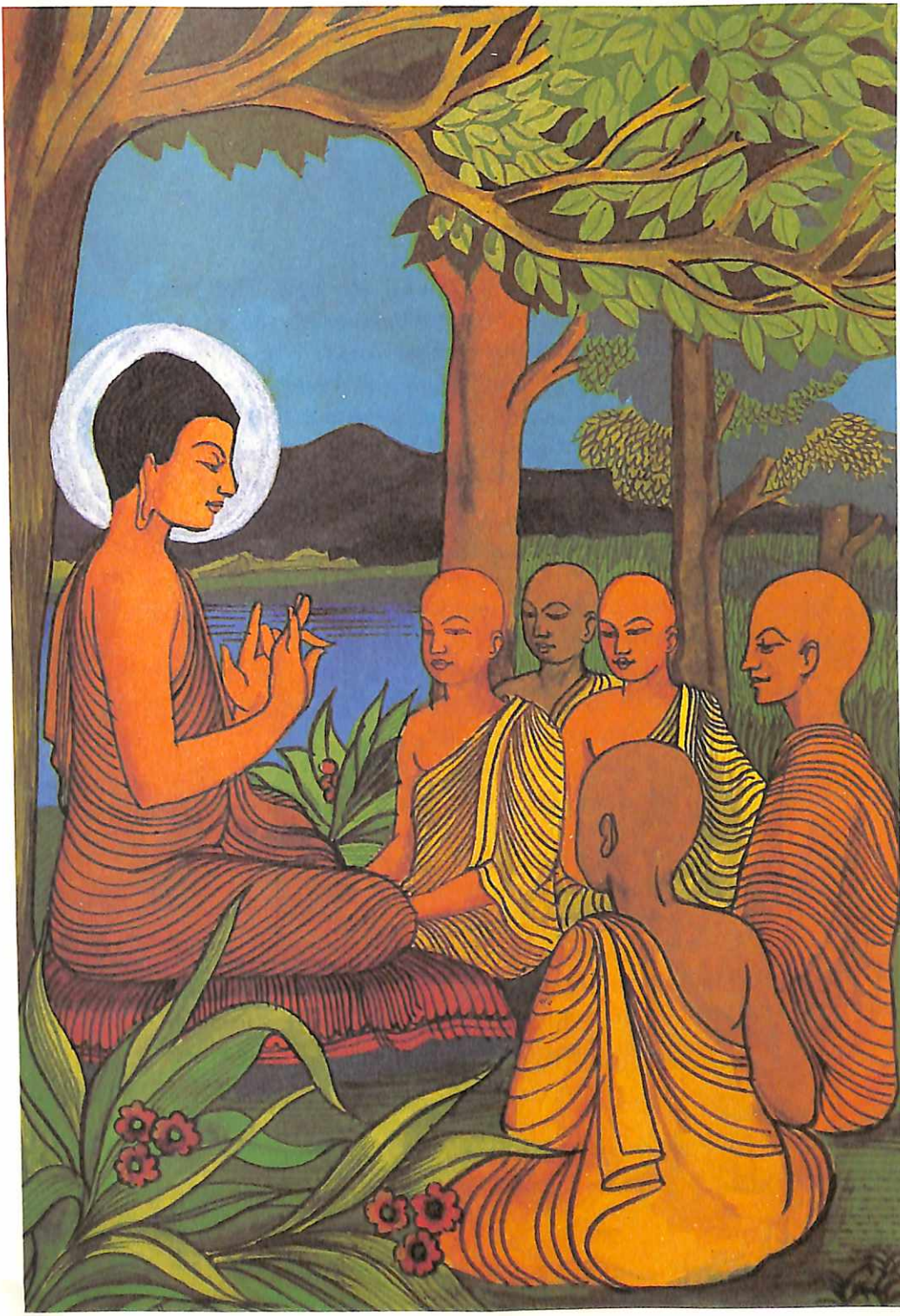
He returned to the shade of a tree at Gaya and with complete faith in himself, started to meditate. He resolved, "I shall not move from here until I have attained Full Enlightenment," and he spent the whole evening in this meditation posture. Many thoughts came to distract him from his goal. There were thoughts of his beloved wife and child, memories of his luxurious home, of parents and friends, of feasts and of sports. All these flashed before his eyes. But he was not tempted. With determined will, he continued to meditate until his mind became pure and clear. He emerged as the Fully Enlightened One, the Buddha.

The search of six long years had ended. It was a day when the full-moon shone, casting a bright silver light on the whole countryside, a day in the month of Vesak, (May). The Buddha was thirty-five years old and, for a week, following Enlightenment, he sat under the tree enjoying the state of perfect happiness he had achieved. The Tree later became known as the Tree of Enlightenment or the Bodhi-Tree and the place is still known as Buddha Gaya. He spent a further six weeks near the tree. It is said that for a whole week, he gazed at the tree with gratitude for having sheltered him.



At the end of the seventh week, he decided to teach the Doctrine (the Dhamma) he had discovered. He knew that the Dhamma could not be easily understood and that it had little appeal for ordinary people. Nevertheless, he felt it was his duty to go forth, for there were many whose minds were ready to receive his message. His teachers were dead. Then he remembered the five ascetics who had broken away from him. He walked for many days on foot over one hundred miles, to the Deer Park at Isipatana, near Benares, where the ascetics still practised their extreme discipline.

Seeing him at a distance, they resolved to ignore him. But, as the Buddha came closer, they noticed that he had changed. He was majestic and commanding. There was a certain radiance about him. They went forward and greeted him, offered him a seat and, in the customary manner, fetched water to wash his feet. That evening, on a full moon day in the month of Esala (July) the Buddha gave his First Sermon. He said to the five ascetics, "Monks, a recluse should avoid the two extremes. The Middle Way, as I understand and practise it, gives vision and knowledge and leads to Enlightenment."



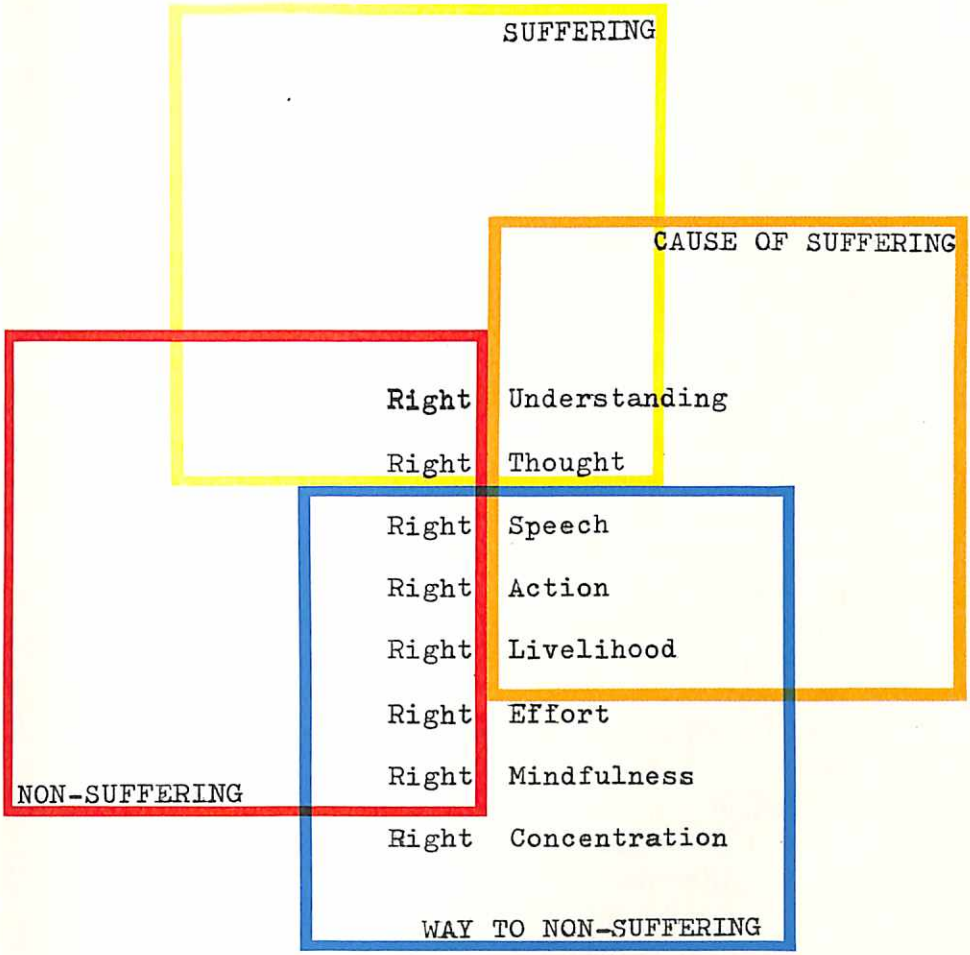
The Buddha then explained to them the Four Noble Truths, which form the basis of his teaching.

1) There is suffering in the world, like sickness, old age, death, parting from loved ones, and not getting what you want.
2) The cause of suffering is desire or craving based on greed and selfishness. The more we crave, the more unsatisfactory life is.
3) To end suffering, desire must be removed. (Just as a fire dies when no fuel is added, so unhappiness will end when the fuel of craving is removed).
4) The way to end suffering is to follow the Middle Path or the 'Noble Eightfold Path', namely:-

    Right Understanding
    Right Thought
    Right Speech
    Right Action
    Right Livelihood
    Right Effort
    Right Mindfulness
    Right Concentration

The five ascetics who had highly developed minds understood his teaching and became his first disciples; the Sangha or Community of Monks was thus formed.

FOUNDATION OF BUDDHISM



Right Speech	Right Effort	Right Understanding
Right Action	Right Mindfulness	Right Thought
Right Livelihood	Right Concentration	
MORALITY	MENTAL DISCIPLINE	WISDOM
(sīla)	(samādhi)	(paññā)

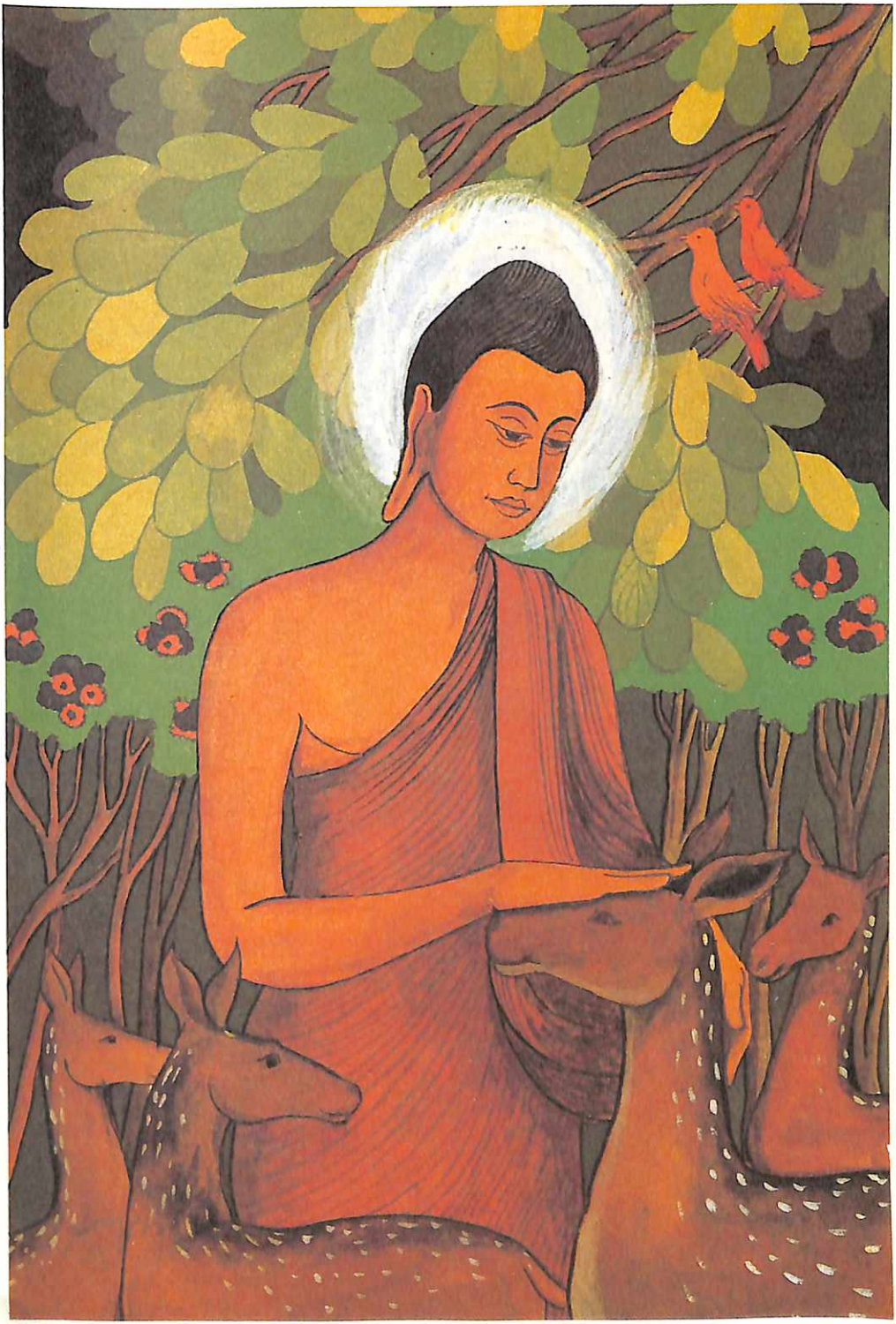
The Buddha said, "Go forth, Monks. Teach this Dhamma which is excellent in the beginning, in the middle and at the end. There are some who have only a little 'dust' in their eyes; they will understand."

So they set out to spread the Dhamma. The Buddha himself walked from village to village. On one of his journeys to the village of Rajagaha, he saw a herd of deer. A lame fawn was amongst them. The Buddha picked it up and asked the shepherd where he was taking them. "These deer belong to King Bimbisara. They are going to be sacrificed in a sacred fire." The Buddha, carrying the fawn, walked with the shepherd to the King. "O King, killing innocent animals is a cruel deed. It is not the way to happiness."

He explained that life is sacred. As the 'Light of Asia' beautifully expresses:

'Of life, which all can take but none can give,
Life, which all creatures love and strive
to keep,
Wonderful, dear and pleasant unto each,
Even to the meanest . . . . .'

The King and his people accepted the teaching and took refuge in the Buddha.



When King Suddhodana heard that his son was now at Rajagaha, he sent a messenger to the Buddha that he was getting old and wished to see his son before he died. So the Buddha and his disciples arrived at Kapilavastu and the people flocked to see their Prince.

It was seven years since he had left home. At the palace, he was greeted by his father and other members of the royal family. He preached the Dhamma to them and they were all convinced of the truth. But not the King.

The following morning, the Buddha went begging from house to house for food. The King was greatly upset.

"How can you disgrace me so? Why can't you eat in the palace?"

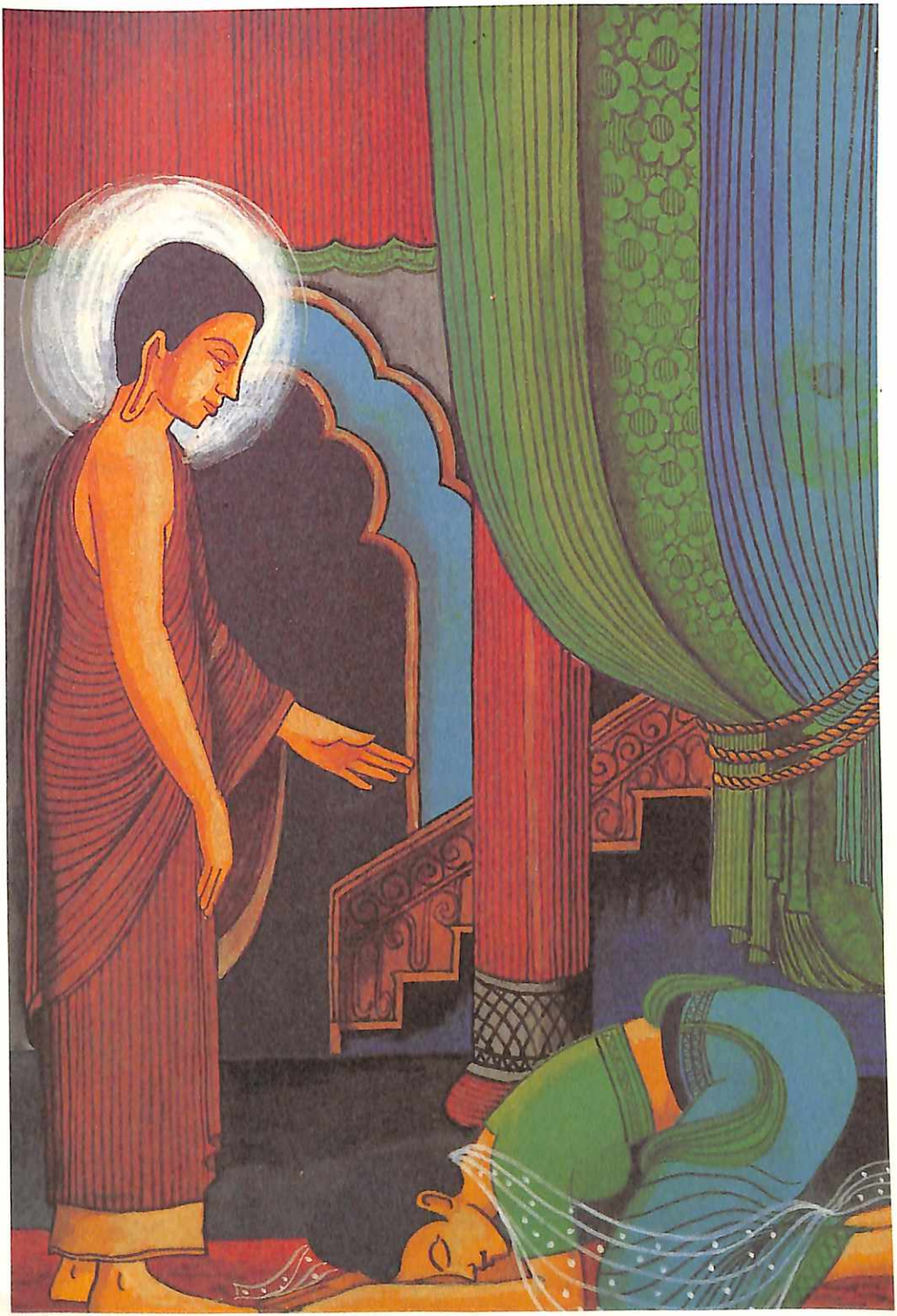
"Begging for food is our custom," replied the Buddha.

"What custom?" asked the King. "You are no beggar, indeed, you belong to the Sakyan line and clan. You are a Prince."

"Your Majesty," said the Buddha, "You may claim descent from Kings but mine is from a long line of Buddhas. They always begged for their food."

Nevertheless, he gave in to the King's repeated requests and had his food in the palace during his stay in Kapilavastu.

Up to now, the Buddha had not seen Yasodhara. So he went to her apartments and when Yasodhara saw him, she fell at his feet and wept. He spoke words of comfort.



On the seventh day of his visit to Kapilavastu, Yasodhara dressed her seven year old son, Rahula, in fine clothes and took him to where the Buddha was.

"That Sage with the golden complexion is your father," she said. "Once, he had great wealth. Go to him and ask him for your inheritance for it should be yours now."

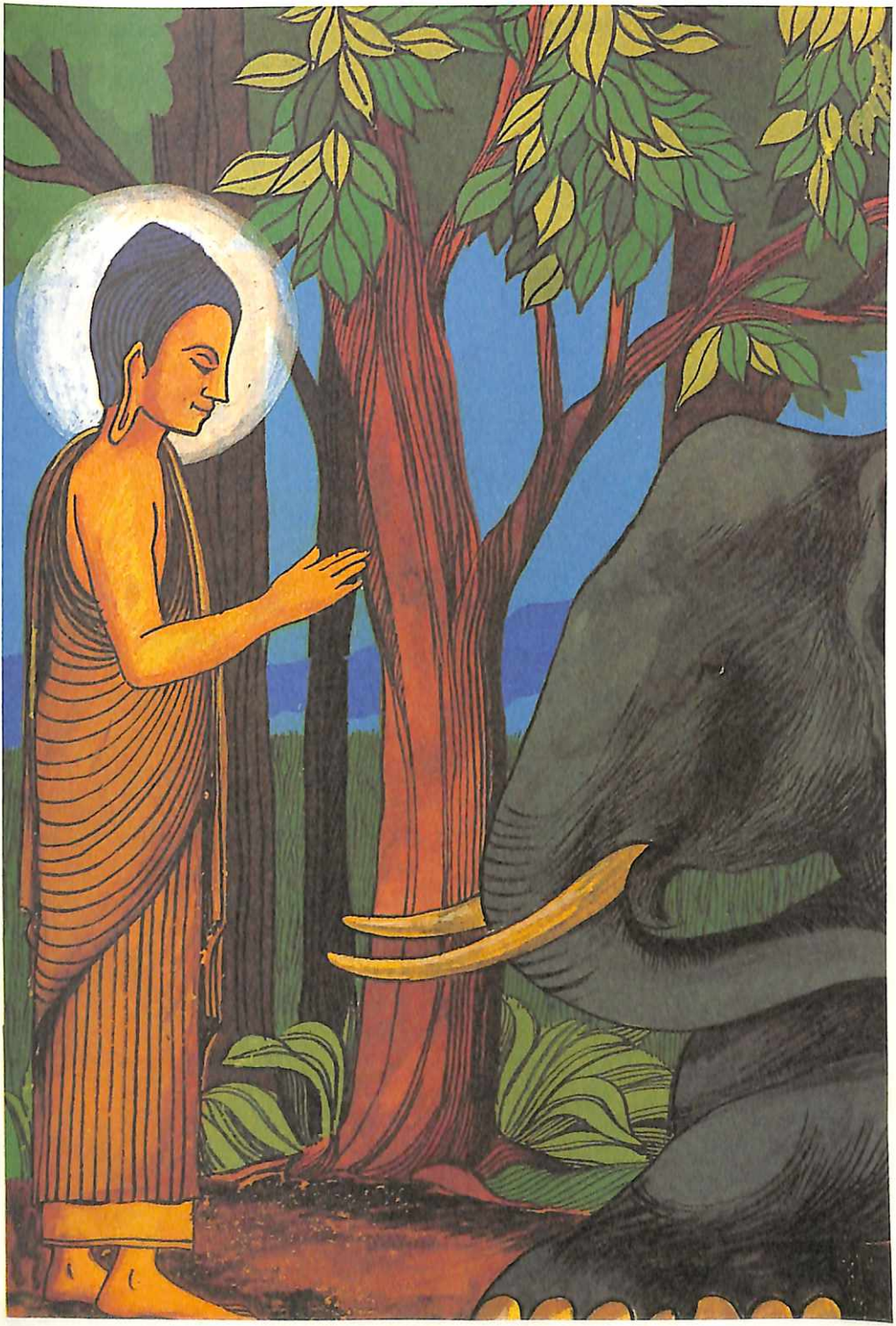
Rahula did as he was told. The Buddha thought, 'He wants his inheritance. He thinks of money, jewels, palaces, chariots, weapons and possessions. But I will give him far greater wealth. I shall teach him the Way to Enlightenment.'

He asked his chief disciple, Sariputta, to ordain Rahula as a monk. When he heard this, King Suddhodana was very sad and told the Buddha respectfully that he should not ordain children without the permission of their parents. "When you left home, without saying goodbye, it made me very unhappy. Then I grew to love Rahula. Now you have taken him too."

The Buddha explained the Truth he had discovered so simply and persuasively that his father consequently accepted his Teaching and many members of the royal family became monks.

One of them was Devadatta, his cousin and childhood playmate. He became jealous of the Buddha and tried many ways to kill him, so that he could lead the Sangha, the community of monks. One day when the Buddha was seated preaching, Devadatta rolled down a big, heavy stone from a great height. But the rock split in two and fell on either side of the Buddha. Another time, he set the drunken elephant, Nalagiri, to attack the Buddha. The raging elephant rushed towards him in a mad fury. The Buddha used his strong mental powers to calm the elephant which then knelt down at his feet. Towards the end of Devadatta's life, he repented and went to the Buddha to bring peace to his troubled mind. He fell on his knees before the Buddha and begged for forgiveness and took refuge in the Buddha.

The Buddha's fame as a teacher was widespread and his followers came from all classes of people. Kings and Brahmins as well as the outcastes and the poor took refuge in him. Many came to him for advice and comfort. One such was the woman, Kisagotami. When her first-born child died, she was stricken with grief. She carried the body and roamed the streets asking for a medicine to bring back her child to life. People thought she had gone mad. A kind and wise man took her to the Buddha.



The Buddha knew how unhappy she was and told her to fetch some mustard seeds. These were commonly used in medicines and were readily available. Kisagotami was relieved.

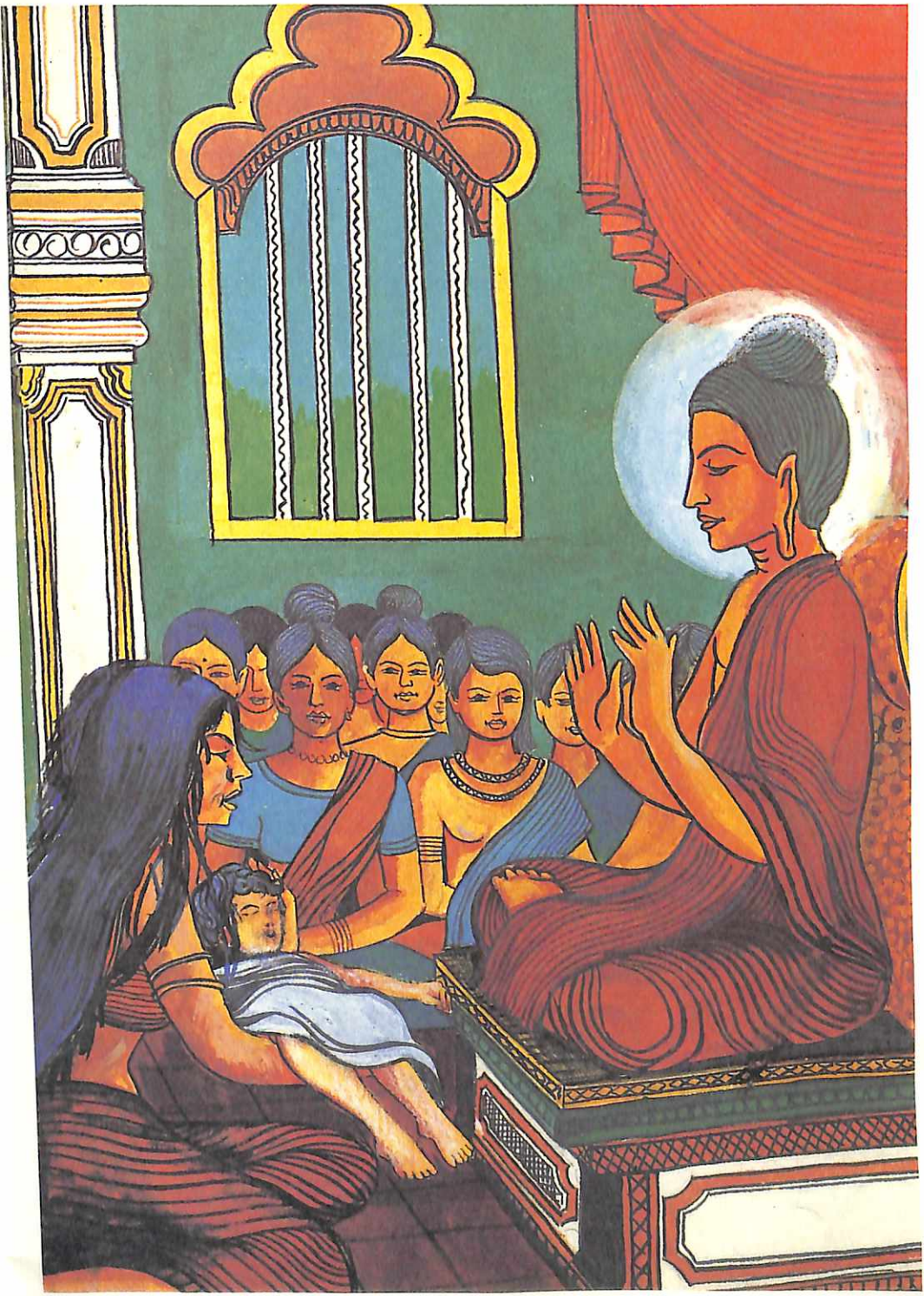
"But remember, they must come from houses where nobody has died. If you can bring me a handful, I will restore life to your child."

Kisagotami went from house to house, family to family, but they all replied, "Oh, there have been many deaths here," or "My husband," (or father, mother, sister, etc.) "died here recently."

She went right through the city without finding a single house where there had been no death. She returned to the Buddha having realised what the great teacher had wanted her to find out for herself . . . that death is common to all. "My grief made me blind," she told him.

Her mind was ready to receive his teaching.

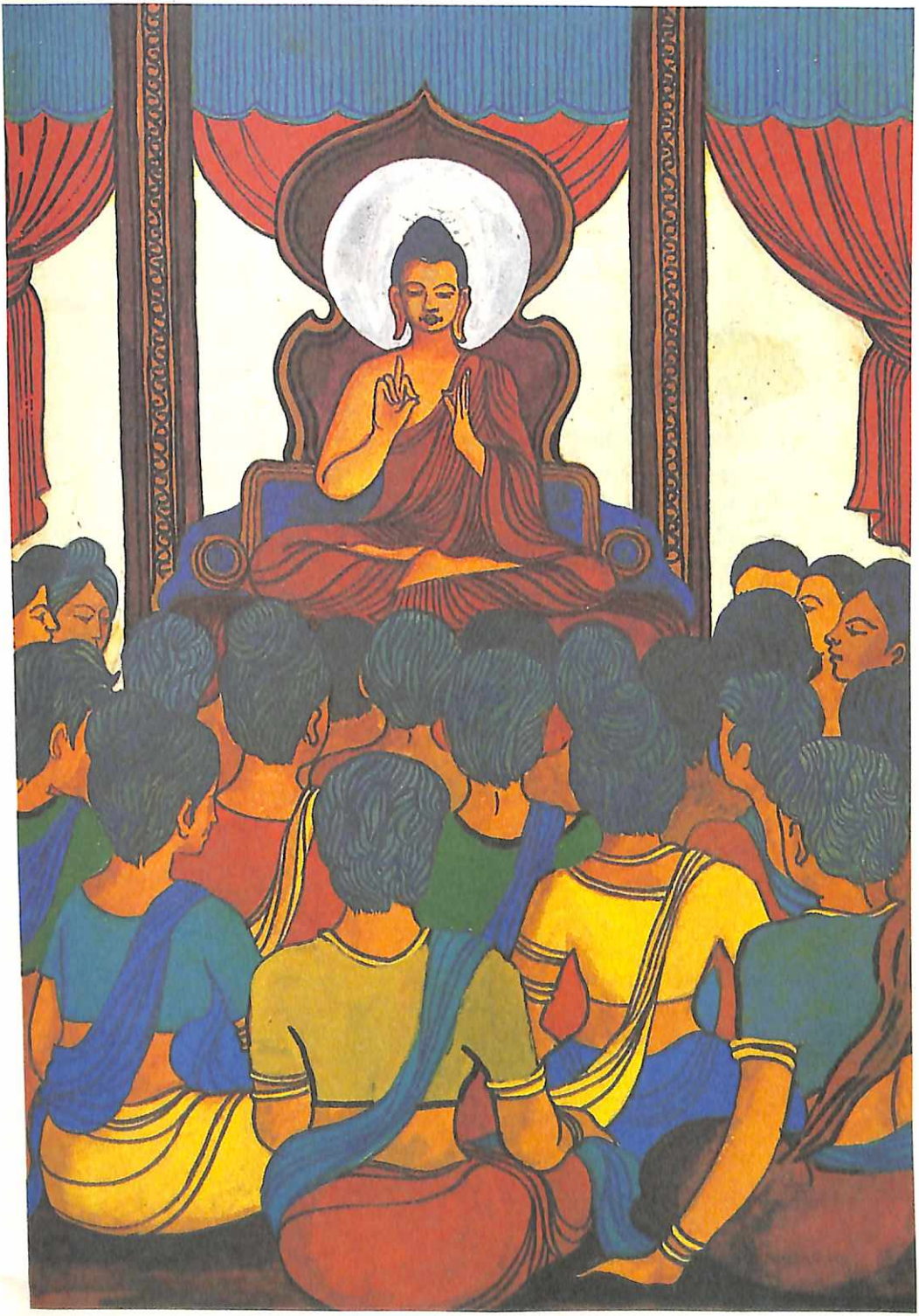
"Everything that ever has come into existence, or ever will come into existence, inevitably, must, and will again pass out of existence. In the whole world, there is only one law, that nothing lasts forever."



Soon after King Suddhodana died, Prajapati Gotami, the Buddha's step-mother (his mother's sister) came to the Buddha and asked him to ordain her as one of his followers in the same way as he did men who formed the Sangha. The Buddha refused to do this even though she begged him three times.

Gotami would not be deterred, so along with a number of women from Kapilavastu, she had her hair cut off and put on a yellow robe and followed the Buddha to Vesali, where he was then staying. When they arrived, they were in a bad state with their feet sore and bleeding. Ananda, who was the favourite disciple of the Buddha, saw Gotami waiting and asked her what had happened. When she told him everything, he went to the Buddha and eventually persuaded him to ordain Gotami.

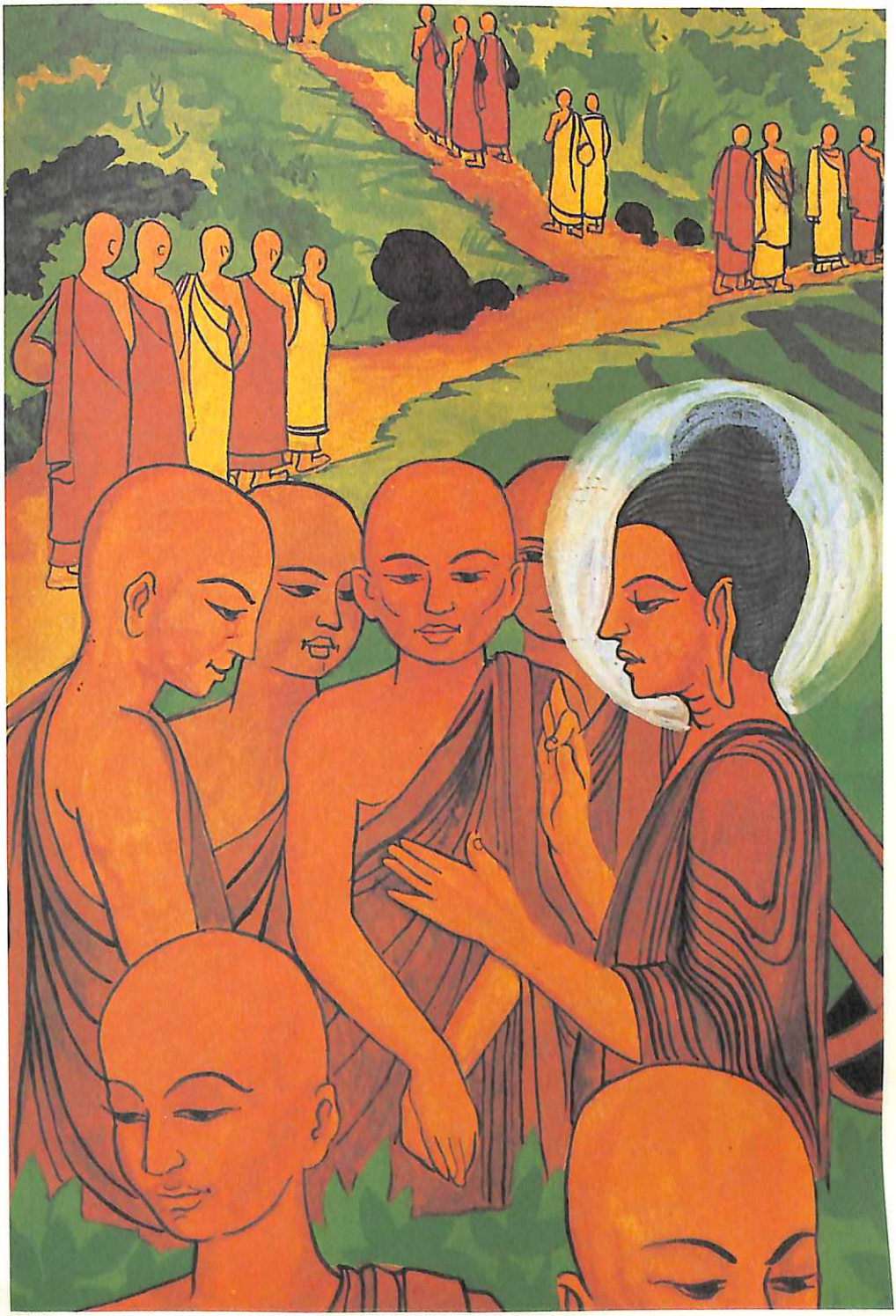
Although the Buddha said that women would understand his highest teaching, he did not want to create an Order of nuns because he knew that such an Order would only last for 500 years. Because Gotami had looked after him so kindly when he was young, he did ordain her and all the Sakyan women who were with her, but it was as the Buddha said; the Order of nuns has not continued in the same way as the Sangha.



The Buddha was thirty-five when he attained Enlightenment and everywhere he went, crowds gathered to see him and hear his teaching. For the next forty-five years, he walked with his monks in northern and eastern India teaching the Dhamma. Kings, noblemen and wealthy merchants generously donated monasteries and parks in which he and his monks could live.

In later times, monasteries became places of learning and the Buddha's teaching spread over Asia into lands such as Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, China, Korea and Japan. Today, it is the religion of over five hundred million people. The cultural advancement of all Buddhist nations was mainly due to his teachings. No arms were used, no wars were fought and no drop of blood was ever shed in its mission. It spread peaceably due to the love and compassion it taught and its appeal to the reasoning mind.

The Buddha advised the Sangha to lead a very simple, calm life in the service of the people. Monks were to have food, clothing, shelter and medicine but were not to have luxurious homes or many possessions. For those who follow his teaching, the Buddhist way of life is one of training to be unselfish and to be free from greed.

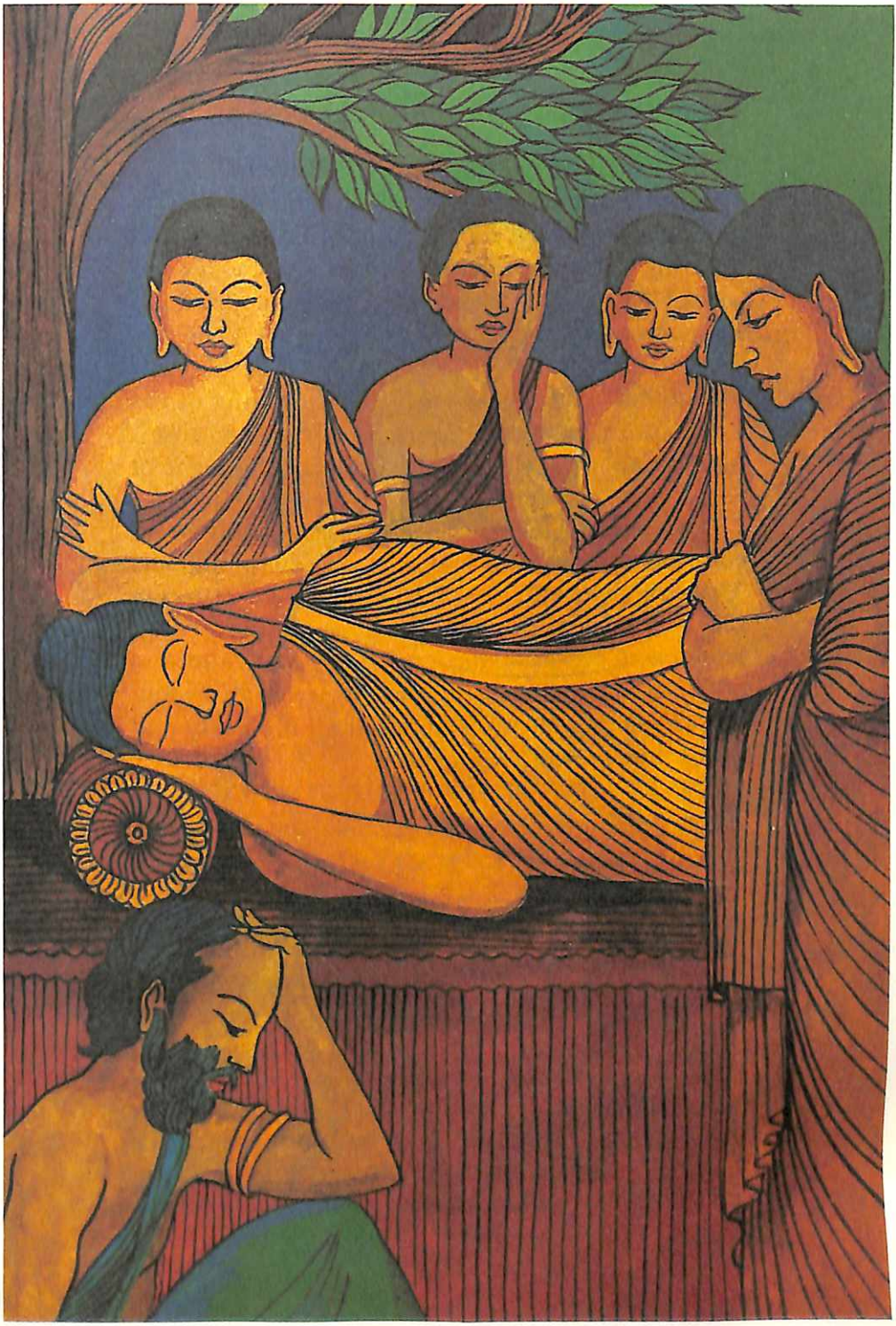


The aged Buddha was dying. He became ill near Kusinara, in modern Uttara Pradesh. While he lay in a grove of Sal trees, he addressed the monks round him,

"All things decay. Be mindful, be righteous and be vigilant. Be lamps, unto yourselves. Transient are all component things. Therefore, strive earnestly to attain perfection." These were the Buddha's last words.

The Buddha passed away at the age of eighty. There was to be no more birth or death for him.

On the full moon day in the month of Vesak as the dusk fell in peace and quiet on the birds and animals, the Buddha was cremated with all the pomp and ceremony due to royalty. His relics found their way to many Buddhist countries to be treasured and revered for all time.



The Fully Enlightened One. (The Buddha)
The Buddha was a man who had complete understanding of life and its problems. He realised that suffering was a characteristic of all living beings and he decided to give his teaching of loving-kindness and compassion to the world.

Enlightenment The perfect understanding of life which the Buddha reached.

Meditation Meditation is the development of concentration to very high levels.

Concentration is necessary in everyday life to do one's job or clean one's house, do the shopping, etc. Through meditating on one subject, like counting the 'in' and 'out' breath, or in pervading loving-kindness to everyone one knows, one can calm and quieten the mind so that one has peace and freedom from stress and mental pain amid all the hurry and rush of modern 20th century life.

With bad advisors forever left behind,
From paths of evil he departs for eternity,
Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light
And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings
of Samantabhadra's deeds,
I now universally transfer.
May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Pure Land of
Limitless Light!

~The Vows of Samantabhadra~

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha,
And be born in His Western Pure Land of
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill
Without exception these Great Vows,
To delight and benefit all beings.

~The Vows of Samantabhadra
Avatamsaka Sutra~

DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA

南無阿彌陀佛

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Thanks for your co-operation.
Namo Amitabha!

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